TRUTH TRIUMPHS

Life and Achievements of

METROPOLITAN MAR DIONYSIUS VI

Revd. Dr. V. C. SAMUEL

ܒܝܬ ܡܪܕܘܬܐ

ܕܡܠܦܢܐ ܓܘܪܓܝܣ ܒܪ ܐܢܛܘܢ ܕܒܝܬ ܟܝܪܐܙ

Ex Libris

Beth Mardutho Library

The Malphono George Anton Kiraz Collection

ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܕܫܩܠ ܠܗ ܠܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܓܙܐ
ܐܘ ܦܫܛ ܐܝܕܗ ܠܡܓܢܒܗ ܢܗܘܐ ܡܫܡܠܐ ܥܡ ܝܗܘܕܐ
ܘܢܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܚܕ ܡܚܠܦܢܐ ܘܡܫܪܐ ܕܢܘܡܘ ܢܦܠ ܥܠܘܗܝ
ܠܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܪܝܐ ܠܐ ܒܝܘܡ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܫܪܝܐ ܥܡܗ
ܚܣܝܢܘ ܐܡܝܢ ܕܢܦܩ ܠܗ ܠܟܬܒܐ܀

Anyone who asks for this volume, to read, collate, or copy from it, and who appropriates it to himself or herself, or cuts anything out of it, should realize that s/he will have to give answer before God's awesome tribunal as if s/he had robbed a sanctuary. Let such a person be held anathema and receive no forgiveness until the book is returned. So be it, Amen! And anyone who removes these anathemas, digitally or otherwise, shall himself receive them in double.

TRUTH TRIUMPHS

An Account of the Life and Achievements of

Malankara Metropolitan

VATTASSERIL GEEVARGHESE MAR DIONYSIUS

By

The Revd. Father Dr. V. C. Samuel

MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHURCH PUBLICATIONS

(The Publication of this book is subscribed by

The Board of

Vattasseril Mar Dionysius Golden Jubilee Endowment Fund)

TRUTH TRIUMPHS

Author: The Revd. Father Dr. V. C. Samuel

First Impression: 1986

Copies: 3000

Published by: The Malankara Orthodox Church Publications Department, Catholicate Aramana, Kottayam.

All Rights Reserved

Price: Rs. 20/-

Printed at The C. M. S. Press, Kottayam-686 001, Kerala.

"My LORD and My GOD"

CONTENTS

		Pages
1.	Preface	v
2.	Dedication	ix
3.	A Word of Introduction by His Holiness the Catholicos	xi
4.	Foreword	xiii
5.	Introduction	xxi
6.	Chapter One: *The Malankara Syrian Church in the 19th Century*	
	a. Early in the Century	1
	b. The Founding of the Old Seminary	3
	c. The C.M.S. Mission of Help	5
	d. The Failure of the Mission	7
	e. Division in the Church	9
	f. In the Later Stage	14
	g. The Church Under the Patriarch	19
	h. A Glance into Earlier History	21
	i. Developments in the 18th Century	25
7.	Chapter Two: *Mar Dionysius VI in History*	
	1. Early Life	29
	2. As a Clergyman and Teacher	29
	3. Consecration as Metropolitan	32
	4. As Malankara Metropolitan	35
	5. Clash with the Patriarch	39
	6. The Divided Community	43
	7. The Litigation in its First Stage	47
	8. The Mardin Trip	49
	9. Litigation in the Second Stage	53

		Pages
10.	The Suspension Case	55
11.	Visit of Patriarch Mar Elias III	58
12.	Facing the Desertion of Mar Ivanios	64
13.	The Last Days	65
8.	Chapter Three: *Mar Dionysius, a Church Leader*	
1.	Concerning our Sources	67
2.	The Issue concerning the Faith	70
3.	Concerning Relations with other Churches	73
4.	The Issue Concerning Autonomy	78
9.	Chapter Four: *A Historic Achievement*	
1.	The Significance of the Catholicate	87
2.	The Problem faced by Mar Dionysius VI	88
3.	The Catholicate of Tagrith	90
4.	The Catholicate in History	97
5.	Nature of the Catholicate at Kottayam	108
10.	Chapter Five: *Mar Dionysius VI, the Man*	
a.	Nobility of Character	112
b.	Self-Control	116
c.	Love for the Church	118
d.	Concern for Peace in the Church	123
11.	Conclusion	127

PREFACE

The committee in charge of the Jubilee celebration that was conducted with the 50th death anniversary of Vattaseril Mar Dionysius decided that a book dealing with his life and achievements should be published in English, and I was asked to undertake the responsibility of writing the same. I gladly accepted it because of a genuine respect which I had developed for Mar Dionysius. The committee, on its part, took up the project out of a feeling that the contributions of the metropolitan for the Indian Church should not be allowed to pass into oblivion. People, particularly of the coming generations, should know who Mar Dionysius VI was and what he did for the Church.

I should, however, make a personal confession at the very outset. Though I had the privilege of seeing Mar Dionysius while I was rather young, I had not known him personally. The reason for this inability on my part was the division in the Church. Following the metropolitan's excommunication by patriarch Mar Abdullah in 1911 and the consequent split in the Church, it was with the patriarch's party that my family had its allegiance. However, early in my life I remember my father, a teacher by profession, saying that Vattaseril Thirumeny was a great man. Though these words made an impression on me at that time, later when a suggestion was made that I should receive from him ordination as a deacon, I turned it down. Instead, I was ordained in the partiarch's party. As a deacon I learned there the Syriac language in depth and read a number of books that were available to me in it, and as a priest I taught the language and other ecclesiastical subjects. My reading and experience however worked in me a change, and by early forties I became convinced that the Malankara Syrian Church should have its autonomy, and that the Catholicate at Kottayam was the God-given answer to the need of this Church. Naturally I was drawn to the Catholicate, to which I have continued to be loyal ever since.

It was, in fact, my feeling of affinity with the catholicate that led me to admire Mar Dionysius. As the person who laboured for establishing it in the face of many odds, he grew large in my estimation.

My contacts with persons who had known him closely confirmed me in my unreserved reverence for him. In this connection I recall two of my intimate friends, Father K. C. Varghese of the Tadagam Ashram and Sri N. M. Abraham of Olesha, both of whom are now behind the veil. They had held Mar Dionysius in the highest of esteem, and I learned from them many things about him. Then the writings of Z. M. Paret dealing with the life and work of the metropolitan, as well as his depositions in court cases led me to realise his greatness more than ever before. In preparing this book, I have used Paret and a few other publications relevant to the subject, in addition to the information gathered from other sources.

This book reflects further the knowledge acquired by the author from his study of ancient and eastern Church history. All the Syriac writings referred to by Mar Dionysius as having been read by him and a great deal more are known to the author. This awareness enables him to discuss the evolution of the ministry, including the patriarchates and catholicates in the Syrian Churches, both Antiochene and Persian. In addition, he is fairly well conversant with the history of the eastern Churches in general. What is done in this book is not therefore to giv a collection of facts in the life of Mar Dionysius drawn from the works of Z. M. Paret. A substantial amount of knowledge which the author has gained through his many years of study and experience is incorporated in it, so that he is not limited in his presentation to what is usually maintained by many in the Church.

An important point about Mar Dionysius which has attracted the present author to him is his ecumenical vision. There is a twofold concern here, to which we should pay our attention. In the first place, the Malankara Orthodox Church should come to its own under the spiritual leadership of the catholicate. Conserving the real values of the eastern Christian heritage which it has received from the Syrian and other sources, it should seek to relate them to its life in the Indian context. Secondly, without necessarily ignoring its ecumenical relationships abroad, whether in the east or in the west, it should pay more attention to other Indian churches in fruitful dialogue. From this point of view, it is gratifying that it has made a beginning in this area, both by affiliating its Theological Seminary with the Serampore College (University) and by accepting membership in the National Council of Churches in India and the Kerala Council

of Churches. From what can be known of Mar Dionysius, we can say that he would have felt immensely pleased with this development.

I am grateful to the committee for asking me to write this book and undertaking to publish it. It is indeed my sincere joy to present the work as a humble tribute of mine to the Church.

Both in the preparation and in the publication of the book I am indebted to a number of persons in addition to the committee. First of all, my heart-felt debt of gratitude goes to His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I, who kindly went through it in spite of the limitation of his age and the time available to him, and made a number of observations for improving the original draft. I have taken all of them seriously and made appropriate corrections in the book. My sincere respect and thanks are due to His Holiness for all the encouragement he gave me and above all for the words of commendation for inclusion in the book.

Among the several others, two names deserve recognition in this connection. They are the Revd. Father K. J. Gabriel of the Orthodox Theological Seminary and Professor K. M. Tharakan. Father Gabriel read the manuscript and offered various suggestions, converted the Malayalam dates which I had noted in the first draft into the dates of the English calendar, and worked with remarkable devotion to bring out the book through the press. Prof. Tharakan also read the manuscript and made several editorial corrections in the text and wrote the Foreword. To both of them I express my unbounded, thanks.

A word of very sincere thanks is due to the C. M. S. Press Kottayam, for taking up the printing of the book. The Press has fulfilled the job very neatly and promptly. I am deeply grateful to the Manager and his staff.

Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Dionysius
(1909—1932)

DEDICATED

To

The Sacred and Ever-Loving Memory
of the Architect of our Ecclesiastical Freedom

HIS GRACE
MAR DIONYSIUS VI
MALANKARA METROPOLITAN 1909 To 1934

To

THE SUFFERING HE ENDURED
In Seeking to Work Out His Vision
In Faith and Dedication

And

To

THE CATHOLICATE AT KOTTAYAM
GOD MAY GRANT IT
SPIRITUAL STRENGTH AND VITALITY
FOR EVER

Telegrams: DEVALOKAM Telephone: 8500

THE ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
CATHOLICATE OF THE EAST

BASELIUS MARTHOMA MATHEWS I
CATHOLICOS OF
THE APOSTOLIC THRONE OF ST. THOMAS
AND
MALANKARA METROPOLITAN

CATHOLICATE PALACE
KOTTAYAM-686 038
KERALA, INDIA

20-10-1986

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

We are extremely glad to read Father Dr. V. C. Samuel's book, 'Truth Triumphs'--a brief account of the life and contribution of the Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. 'Truth Triumphs'—This caption rightly suits a book which deals with the life and contribution of Mar Dionysius. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius was a man of prayer, truthful and transparent. He was a saint who never stooped before falsehood. The Malankara Orthodox Church has the right to be a national autocephalous and autonomous Church, as every other national Orthodox Church is. This strong conviction was the guiding principle that led Mar Dionysius all through his life. He understood the Catholicate to be the symbol of self-identity and independence of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and this makes the establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara in 1912 a unique and historic contribution of Mar Dionysius. It is in fact with him and the establishment of the Catholicate that the Malankara Orthodox Church begins its modern history.

Father Dr. V. C. Samuel explains and establishes forcefully and convincingly all these facts in this book with sufficient evidences from history. Having given a brief biographical sketch of Mar Dionysius, the author concentrates on his contribution-the Catholicate. The legacy and the relevance, the prospects and the possibilities of the Catholicate are discussed in detail. Father Samuel is one of the most prominent scholars of the Oriental Orthodox Churches (including the Malankara Orthodox Church). He has a thorough

knowledge of their history and theology. It is from this wider setting that Father Samuel observes and evaluates the life and contribution of Mar Dionysius.

We wish, all the members of the Church read this precious book. It is inspiring, edifying and educative. It is with immense joy and appreciation that we introduce this book to all the members of the Malankara Orthodox Church as well as to all those who are interested in the history of the Malankara Orthodox Church of modern times.

Sd/-

BASELIUS MARTHOMA MATHEWS I

CATHOLICOS OF THE EAST.

FOREWORD

'Truth Triumphs' is an excellent contribution made by the Indian Orthodox Church to ecumenical studies in recent times. The book deals with the life and times of Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius, the architect of the modern Indian Orthodox Church as it is today. It also traces the history of the Indian Orthodox Church from the first century of the Christian Era, with special emphasis on the inception and growth of the Catholicate of the East. The author Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel needs no introduction either to the English reading public in general or to the people of Kerala in particular. He is an authority on the history of the Oriental and Eastern Churches as well as on Christology. His research works on the Chalcedonian Synod have won unstinted praise from eminent theologians both in the west and in the east.

Tradition has it that St. Thomas came to Kerala in A. D. 52 and founded here a church that was part and parcel of the universal Church, the one true holy undivided Church spread over different parts of the world. Little is known about the history of the Church of Malankara in early times; research scholars have spared no pains, no efforts, to dispel the darkness that shrouds this period in the history of the Kerala Church and to throw light on its status in the first centuries of the Christian era.

There is consensus among Church historians that the Malankara Church was at first affiliated to the Church of Persia. The question then arose whether this Church owed allegiance to the Church of Antioch or whether it accepted the ecclesiastical suzerainty of the Roman Catholic Church. Though it may be established that the churches in the western Roman empire were directly affiliated to Roman Catholic Church, it is hard to prove that churches of the eastern Roman empire, and churches outside the empire, ever acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope.

Originally every provincial church enjoyed full autonomy under an episcopa, or a bishop who could ordain priests and deacons or even his successor. But then, the different churches sharing the same faith came together and formed themselves into bigger groups

with a college of bishops having ecclesiastical powers over them. The bishops could choose one among them as the presiding bishop; when the churches in the western Roman empire came together they elected the bishop of Rome as the head; under the title of the Pope the bishop of Rome came to have primacy in the college of bishops in the western Roman empire. Churches outside the western Roman empire formed themselves into different sees and each see came to have a supreme head who was known as Patriarch; There were such Patriarchs in Alexandria and in Antioch. In the Persian empire, the presiding bishop assumed the title of Catholicos, which in rank and position was equal to that of the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Antioch.

A persistent research scholar as he is, Dr. V. C. Samuel concentrates his attention on the Catholicate in Persia. He points out that either in the second half of the 3rd century or in the early part of the 4th century there emerged in the Christian Church of Perisa, a Catholicos with full powers over the entire Persian Church and with its headquarters at Seleucia–Ktesiphon. The author says that in a council with thirty bishops which met in 424 A. D. the Church made a resolution that the Catholicos of Seleucia alone was its patriarch, and that it would not tolerate any interference in its life from outside. In 486 A. D. at a special council the Persian Church absolved Patriarch Nestorius from the strictures passed on him by the council of Ephesus. Though it did not accept the theology of Nestorius it recognised him as a Father of the church. Dr. V. C. Samuel shows how at a later period the Catholicate at Seleucia was shifted to Mesopotamia and how the Catholicos at Mesopotamia came to be known as the Patriarch of Babylon.

The Persian Church used the Syriac language for worship and it had the best of relationship with the Church of Antioch. There were quite a few Syrians in Persia, held there as captives; their number increased in course of time. These Syrians could not accept Nestorius as a father of the Church; and they formed themselves into a Syrian church in Persia with the blessings of the Patriarch of Antioch. Later in 629 A. D. the Patriarch of Antioch installed a Catholicate at Tagrith. The Catholicos of Tagrith had full autonomy over his province and enjoyed absolute independence in his see. Dr. V. C. Samuel argues that it was this autonomous catholicate that Patriarch

Abdul Messiah reestablished in Kottayam in 1912 A. D. It enjoyed a status equal to that of the Patriarchate at Antioch in every respect. The belief is that till the advent of the Portughese in Kerala the Malankara Church of St. Thomas was directly under the Persian Catholicate which owed no allegiance to the Church of Antioch or the Church of Rome. It was by a strange irony of history that the Church of St. Thomas came under the ecclesiastical authority of Antioch. The Portughese who came to Kerala subjugated the entire Church of Kerala and brought it under the Roman Catholic regime. They destroyed every other document and evidence which could substantiate the theory that the Kerala Church was independent, functioning under the Persian Catholicate. Thank God, the Persian cross survived their vandalism, it offers ample proof to the influence of the Persian Church on the Kerala Church. Also, it is now proved that the language used for worship in Indian churches was the East Syriac used in Persia and not the West Syriac used by the Syrians of Antioch. In the year 1653 the Marthoma Christians took a vow, known as Koonen Kurish Sathyam that they would not accept the supremacy of Rome (The Syrian Catholic interpretation of the vow is different). It was only the priests and the laymen who took this oath, but they had no bishop to lead them. Thereafter the Marthoma Christians who had severed connection with the Portughese and the Roman Catholic Church were eager to regain the sanctity of Apostolic succession. As they had stuck to the Orthodox faith they wanted their ecclesiastical status regularised by an Orthodox metropolitan delegated by an Orthodox Catholicos or Patriarch. It was as a result of this venture that the Malankara Church came to be affiliated to the Orthodox Syrian Church of Antioch.

The life of the Orthodox Church of India after its affiliation to the Orthodox Church of Antioch was fraught with infinite dangers. The Protestant missionaries who came to India were more interested in evangelisation than prosetalysing fellow Christians. They felt that it was in their interest to enlist the Orthodox Church too in the process of evangelisation. The missionaries by their ardour and commitment won the admiration of a section of Orthodox Syrian Church. Some of them even thought of drawing the orthodox to the faith of the Anglican Church.

It took the entire energy of Mar Dionysius IV to gather the faithful entrusted to his care in his fold and nourish them in the

orthodox faith. Dr. V. C. Samuel points out how in his zeal to protect his fold from the Anglican Church Mar Dionysius IV at a meeting held at Mavelikkara in 1836 persuaded the members of the association to affirm, its loyalty to the Patriarch in a document called Mavelikkara Padiyola. The author wonders whether the situation obtaining in the church warranted such a step. Again when the Marthoma Church was formed, the Orthodox Church under the leadership of Mar Dionysius V convened a meeting of its Association under the presidentship of patriarch Peter III at Mulanthuruthy and reiterated its loyalty to the Patriarch of Antioch. This was in 1876. The state of affairs of the Orthodox Church as it was at the close of the nineteenth century was quite propitious for the establishment of the hegemony of the Patriarch in the see of the Malankara once for all. The best of relations seemed to have subsisted between the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and the Orthodox Church of Malankara. However at heart Patriarch Peter III had from the beginning desired to have ownership of the properties of Malankara Church. Mar Dionysius V never defied the Patriarch, nor did he comply with the demand of the Patriarch to submit a registered deed of transfer of properties to him. Patriarch Peter III did not live long enough to precipitate a crisis in the Church on this score.

Patriarch Peter III was succeeded by Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah. As ill–luck would have it, the Sultan of Turkey ordered the Church to remove Mar Abdul Messiah from office and to install Abdulla as patriarch in his place. It was thus that the Syrian Church of Antioch came to have two patriarchs at a time, one with spiritual authority, but with no temporal powers, and another recognised as Patriarch by the Government of Turkey. Patriarch Mar Abdulla longed to fulfil the desires of his predecessor and to take possession of the properties of the Malankara Orthodox Church. He consecrated Father Vattasseril Geevarghese and another Metropolitan in the fond hope that they would concede to his demand to submit a registered deed of transfer of properties to him. Mar Dionysius VI became Malankara Metropolitan in 1909. The Patriarch had approved of this election by the Association. Later he came to Kerala and made the move to get hold of the properties of the Malankara church. It was in his interest to effect a split in the Malankara Church and he succeeded in unsettling the church and the community. Mar Dionysius VI had the utmost respect for the Patriarch.

but he had greater love for the Malankara Church. He therefore slowly refused to surrender the temporal powers over the Malankara Church to the patriarch. And this set in a period of litigation which has not yet come to a close.

What is given above is just a chronological account; but what Dr. V. C. Samuel gives in this book is a critical history of the Malankara Church based on authentic research and infallible scholarly pursuit and also a critical evaluation of the independent Indian Orthodox Church. The one apparent contradiction we may observe is the still more apparent shift in the positions of Malankara Church in its attitude to the patriarchate in the course of its evolution into an independent church. The heart of the matter, as one can see, is that the Malankara Church has always considered its autonomy in temporal matters very precious. If it had a proclivity to be subservient to a bigger and stronger see, why on earth should it have shirked off the yoke of Roman Catholic domination in the year 1653. When it appealed to the Church of Antioch to regularise its ordination in conformity with the principle of Apostolic succession it never for a while thought of surrendering its temporal authority to the Church of Antioch. The two meetings of the association, the one held at Mavelikkara and the one held at Mulanthuruthy affirmed its determination to protect its freedom from the Protestant faiths. It is true that on either occasion it acknowledged the Patriarch of Antioch as its spiritual head. However the Church did not swerve from this position till it was forced to do so in 1970, when the patriarch refused to acknowledge the apostolic status of St. Thomas.

It is against this background that Dr. V. C. Samuel presents the magnificent figure of Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius VI. The Metroplitan had a majestic personality. The church has given him the appellation of Malankara Sabha Bhasuran or the Sun of the Church. He may as well deserve the name Mar Dionysius VI, the lion–heart. How tragic it is for a prelate to be excommunicated by the nominal head of the church. We have read much about schism in Church history. This was no instance of such a schism. Dionysius VI had taught nothing against the doctrine of the Church. He was excommunicated just because he identified himself with his people; and he had no church, no institution to fall back upon except his own, for the orthodox church had carefully kept itself at

a safe distance from the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches. The Oriental Orthodox Churches are a small group and if they fight among themselves what shall their fate be? Yet there are values worth fighting for; and freedom is one such value. Mar Dionysius fought for the freedom of his church and in this he compares favourably with the foremost freedom fighters of India.

Dr. V. C. Samuel presents the personality of Mar Dionysius from a variety of perspectives, as a man, as a metropolitan, as a freedom fighter, as a theologian, and as a person with ecumenical vision. There had been a tendency among the detractors of Mar Dionysius to caricature him as a belligirent fighter, and a bigoted and narrow-minded parochial prelate noted for his equivocal statements in the court. Dr. V. C. Samuel's brilliant exposition of the greatness of the personality of Mar Dionysius repudiates once for all such shameless and vituperative allegations against the great saintly personality and sets his magnetic three-dimensional statue on a pedestal worthy of the mighty Colossus for the admiration of the pure at heart and the emulation of those who seek the eternal truth that shall make them free. Mar Dionysius knew his Lord and his faith. He knew his people and his church. Above all he knew himself. He knew the truth and he fought for the triumph of truth. He had no malice against anyone, no rancour even against his worst enemies. He always held the patriarchs in high respect; he loved not only his flock; he loved all sections of people. He had no quarrel with other sections of the Christian Church. But it pained him a great deal that his trusted disciple and associate Mar Ivanios joined the Catholic Church. It is trying to hold aloft one's flag when the battle seems to be lost, and the tendency is strong in man to seek refuge in safe shelters. But to remain in the open field and to carry on the fight calls for manliness, courage and supreme faith. By virtue of these qualities, and by virtue of his humanity Mar Dionysius stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries.

Dr. V. C. Samuel shows how Mar Abdul Messiah restored the Catholicate in the Malankara Church. The catholicate that Mar Abdul Messiah instituted in Kottayam was the one that remained for long at Tagrith in Persia. Why the Catholicate of Tagrith rather than of Seleucia? The answer is clear. The Patriarch of Antioch had no affiliation to Seleucia, he had ecclesiastical affiliation only to

Tagarith. The author shows that the Patriarch of Antioch never claimed any authority over the Catholicos of Tagrith; and as such how could the present day Patriarchs claim jurisdiction over Malankara?

The Orthodox Church of India is now independent with the Catholicos at Kottayam as its supreme head. The Catholicos is to the Orthodox Church of India what the Pope is to the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholicos functions through the Holy Synod of which he is also a member. No one claims for him the infallibility of the Pope; yet he is the Father, the holy Father of the church. He is not just the head of a community democratically elected, though the whole community has been indirectly involved in elevating him to that august state. The Catholicos of the Orthodox Church enjoys apostolic succession. He guides the destiny of the church in unison with the Holy Synod. And this status was gained for the Catholicos through the invincible personality of Vattasseril Gheevarghese Mar Dionysius.

The book 'Truth Triumphs' is a fitting tribute to the memory of one of the greatest fathers of the Indian Orthodox Church. It is a book of history, a book of biography and a disquisitional dissertation rolled into one. Though the author has the greatest veneration for the saintly metropolitan, never for once does he eulogise him. His faith in the truth of Indian Orthodox Church is firm and pure, but for that reason he shall not cover it with encomiums. The orthodox church had to struggle against a number of sister churches, the author does not cast aspersions on them, nor does he present them in uncharitable terms.

His outlook is ecumenical. Thanks to his great perspicuity he could see the largeness of the heart of Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius and his ecumenical vision. The Catholics may wonder why the Orthodox who preserve the orthodox faith does not join their fold and the Protestants may fail to understand why the Orthodox with such a zeal for freedom and independent thinking does not reform itself the way the protestants have reformed themselves. In the personality of Mar Dionysius VI Dr. V. C. Samuel finds an adequate answer to these riddles. The catholic–apostolic faith is dear to the orthodox, so also is the mystic al vision. The orthodox believe in the participation of the entire church in the administration of the

church; the autonomy of the diocesan Metropolitan is invaluable to them. Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius VI did always take the faithful in the church in his confidence. He gave the feeling that the Church is as much theirs as it is his. At the sametime, he puts ecclesiology at the heart of the Orthodoxy with its emphasis on mysteries.

This, Fr. Dr. Samuel would contend is the great heritage of the Orthodox church. In Dionysius VI he found the greatest defender of the Orthodox spirit in modern times. It was Francis Bacon who said the very best books are to be chewed and digested and here is such a book worthy to be chewed and assimilated. It is to the good fortune of the Church that it got the dedicated service of such an august personality as Mar Dionysius to defend its culture, autonomy and faith and it is equally to the good fortune of the church that it has such an erudite Malpan as Dr. V. C. Samuel to prepare such an authentic study on such an authentic man.

'Truth Triumphs', I am sure, will find favour with every one interested in the study of the Oriental Orthodox Church of India in particular and go a long way in presenting the Orthodox position to the rest of the Christian world.

Congratulating Dr. V. C. Samuel on the composition of this illuminating work and submitting myself to the intercession of Mar Dionysius VI whose memory is sacred, I present the book to one and all who love truth, charity and peace.

Bhashaposhini.
6–11–1986. Dr. K. M. THARAKAN

INTRODUCTION

Born on 31 October 1858, Mar Dionysius VI left this world on 23 February 1934. The seventy-six years of his life on earth fall within a period of serious turmoil in the history of the Malankara Syrian Church. In fact, from the time of his early youthful days he was involved in it, and from 1911 he led a movement in the Church which established the Catholicate at Kottayam in 1912 under his own guidance and direction.

It is the story of this ecclesiastical stalwart that is told in the following pages. It may be admitted at the very outset that Mar Dionysius VI is looked upon as a controversial figure by the section of the Malankara Syrian Church which was persuaded to renounce the catholicate as an unwanted dignity for the Church. Yet, the fact is that this objection has now lost its cogency. For the section that had opposed the catholicate then, has at present its own catholicos. It is therefore important and necessary that the life and activities of the man who pioneered its founding in 1912 should be taken with reverent devotion and sincere gratitude by both sections.

The attempt made in this volume is not to eulogize a hero, but to record the story of a person who evinced the courage of conviction to follow a course in life, which had many perils and which brought on him privations of various kinds. In fact, on several occasions, faced with intense struggle verging on utter despair, he expressed his unwavering belief that he was fighting for the cause of truth, which was bound to triumph in the end. The title of this book, "Truth triumphs" is, to be sure, an adaptation of the words to this effect of Mar Dionysius himself, uttered at a time when he was not at all sure of what the outcome of his movement would be in the end.

Every human being is a child of his age, and Mar Dionysius was no exception. His historical setting socially and politically was that of Kerala, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the second half of the 19th century the Malankara Syrian Church comprised two parties. One of them sought to introduce a reform in the Church, which a group under the leadership of Abraham malpan of Maramon

had designed. The other opposed the plan stiffly. Of these two parties, it was to the latter that the young Geevarghese of Vattaseril, who later became Mar Dionysius VI, aligned himself. The reform party was successful and made substantial progress till 1875. But this success was then brought to a halt. Thus by the time when Geevarghese was received into one of the minor orders of the Church's ministry in 1876, the party of his affiliation had begun to gain ground. The final decision in court case between the two parties, which the Royal Court of Appeal gave in 1889, was against the reform party. It now separated itself as an independent church and assumed the name, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

The body that countered the reform party, which scored the victory in court, now strengthened itself by accepting officially the spiritual jurisdiction of the Antiochene Syrian Patriarch and adopted formally the name, the Jacobite Syrian Church, which is also known as the Syrian Orthodox Church. It was, to be sure, in the Jacobite Syrian Church that Geevarghese, who had by that time been made a priest, assumed responsibility in various capacities and served the community with devotion and loyalty.

Father V. J. Geevarghese, however, underwent a change in his outlook. Here 1908 should be reckoned as the year which marked the turning point. It was in that year that he was consecrated as a metropolitan by patriarch Mar Abdullah in Jerusalem. In this connection he had direct d alings with the patriarch himself and with metropolitan Sleeba Mar Osthathios, a Syrian national whom Abdullah had planned to appoint formally as his delegate in Kerala. An exceptionally intelligent man, Mar Dionysius could read the mind of the patriarch and of his would-be delegate regarding their objective with reference to the Church of Malabar. He felt within himself that a confrontation with the patriarch was going to be his lot. This, in fact, is what did actually come to pass. Mar Abdullah who visited Kerala in 1909, seeing that his aim of bringing the entire Church under his absolute control was decidedly opposed by a large section of people in the Church, suspected that they were instigated by the metropolitan. As a matter of fact the metropolitan, though he was not in favour of acknowledging the kind of authority claimed for by the patriarch, had done nothing concretely in propagating his views, as the patriarch had imagined. In any case, in order to get him out of his way, Mar Abdullah excommunicated him in June 1911.

The way in which Mar Dionysius reacted to the provocation deserves serious notice. He did not take it as an insult against his person, though it was in fact aimed at humiliating him personally and thereby weaning the people away from loyalty to him. From his point of view, on the other hand, the Church—the Church of Malabar, for that matter—was the object of concern, not his person or of anybody else. He came into the picture only as the accredited leader of the Church. In that capacity he felt that he had the responsibility to safeguard the Church's interests, whatever be the cost he had to pay for it. With this goal in mind, he took the initiative in establishing the catholicate.

With the founding of that institution, Mar Dionysius was faced with the task of getting over two hurdles. He had, on the one hand, to vindicate his right to hold the office of the Malankara Metropolitan challenging the validity of the excommunication pronounced on him by patriarch Mar Abdullah, and on the other to defend and strengthen the catholicate for the future benefit of the Church. Both these tasks called for support from favourable court decisions in order to make them legally viable. However, as we shall see, it was not Mar Dionysius who moved the court to achieve the goal. The India Secretary of the then British government in India raised the question in connection with the disbursement of interest on the deposit money belonging to the Church, which lay with the government. This case was dragged on till about 1930. In 1928 the case was given the final verdict by the High Court of Travancore, granting the metropolitan's right to lead the Church. A full bench of the state's highest court unanimously decreed that the excommunication was invalid, on the ground that the patriarch had not formally tried the metropolitan, by giving him an opportunity for self defence.

Faced with this inviolate court decision, patriarch Elias III who visited Kerala in 1931 openly announced that he withdrew the interdict against Mar Dionysius, but he was not willing even to consider the question of recognizing the catholicate. Moreover, seeing that the metropolitan would stand by the catholicate at any cost, Mar Elias did so far as to plan a fresh excommunication of the man, which his lawyers considered would be defensible. The effort, however, did not bear fruit, and the metropolitan could hold his own till the last day of his life on earth.

A Word about Sources

Mar Dionysius VI had to spend most of his life-time as a metropolitan in an intensely agonizing experience. He had to have his eyes fixed on the outcome of the litigation in courts and guard against opposition from fellow members of the Church, who were determined to ruin him, as it were. This situation made it impossible for him to take up any serious study of theological and allied subjects beyond what he had done early in life. But his native intelligence and personal dedication to a cause, enabled him to stand firm in his convictions and express his views in relation to issues that were raised in court.

In order to discuss the life and achievements of Mar Dionysius VI we have sufficient source materials from which to draw information. In this context we should call to memory the unforgettable service rendered by the late Z. M. Paret in the four volumes of the *Malankara Nasranikal* in Malayalam. In preparing this book we are heavily indebted to him for a large part of what we bring out. Paret saw in Mar Dionysius VI, as did his brother metropolitan Mar Ivanios, a leader among men who stood unwaveringly firm in the service of his Church. In spite of the infirmity of his old age, Paret dedicated himself to preserve everything that he could lay hands on, referring to the life and activities of Mar Dionysius. The four volumes are indeed very precious collections, which the Church should treasure in sincere gratitude to the man who laboured on them.

Of the four volumes, vloume IV, entitled *Vattaseril Mar Dionysius* deals with the life and accomplishments of the person from his early days to his departure from this earthly existence. The next is volume VIII alias *Nityaksharangal* I. It contains a large amount of materials of value as well as depositions of Mar Dionysius in court from June to October 1918 as a witness in the first civil suit. Vol. IX, or *Nityaksharangal* II, includes literature dealing with the conflict in the Church, the relation between Mar Dionysius and Mar Ivanios of Bethany who joined the Roman Catholic Church, and the former's depositions in the Suspension Case from August to December 1929. Vol. X, or *Nityaksharangal* III, incorporates the judgments in courts, the role played by the *Malayala Manorama* in the conflict, Mar Dionysius' Mardin trip, and the two literary productions of Mar Dionysius. These volumes contain together almost all materials

relevant for a discussion of the life and achievements of the metropolitan. In this study a great deal of these sources have been drawn on. It is hoped that what has been attempted here will enable people of our generation as well as those who come after us to appreciate Mar Dionysius VI as a man and his contribution.

Mar Dionysius VI did in fact see a vision for the Church in the establishment of the catholicate. Thereby he began a new era in the history of the Indian Church. However, the many struggles which he had to encounter and the various limitations with which he had been surrounded, did not leave him free to work out in practice the implications of his vision. It is left to us to carry them forward for the benefit of the coming generations. If this publication helps the readers to realize that role, the author will be immensely gratified.

CHAPTER ONE

The Malankara Syrian Church in the 19th Century

In 1858, when Vattaseril Geevarghese was born, the Malankara Syrian Church existed in a state of internal conflict. Two parties in it were struggling, each to gain control of the Church and its assets. Mathews Mar Athanasius, whom the state had recognized by a royal proclamation issued in 1852, was the metropolitan of the Church. He had his personal inclination to one of the two parties. Though he had loyal adherents, a considerable body of the clergy and people were opposed to him. But the latter were more or less powerless because of the support which he enjoyed from the government.

The feud had a history which, with reference to its immediate background, should be traced to the beginning of the 19th century, and which so far as its more remote development is concerned goes back to the second half of the 17th century.

a) Early in the 19th century

By the dawn of the 19th century the British had established themselves in India, and Kerala had come under their political sway. The Kerala of today included then the three regions of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. The first two of them were native states, each ruled by its own king, and the third included the territories of the Zamorin of Calicut which the British had liquidated and annexed to the Madras Province of British India. The two native states had accepted the political hegemony of Britain over them and agreed to pay an annual tribute to the overlord. A resident appointed by the British Crown was stationed in them to preserve its interests and keep the link between the parties.

The first two residents, Colonel Colin Macaulay and Col. John Munro, were Anglican Christians of Protestant persuasion who were at heart interested in the advancement of Christianity in the Indian subcontinent. Naturally they were drawn to befriend the Christian

communities of the Kerala regions, both Roman Catholic and Malankara Syrian. In this policy they departed from the tradition of both the Portuguese and the Dutch, who had held sway over the country in sucession before them. Of these two earlier powers, the first were Roman Catholics who were keen to force adherence to Rome on the Indian Church, and the second were Calvinist Protestants who had little sympathy, for the Malankara Syrian section of the Church. The Malankara Syrian Church at that time was in fact in a condition deserving very real assistance. These British residents were willing to extend all possible help to it.

It was in the days of Macaulay, who assumed office in 1800, that an amount of 3,000/- star pagodas, the equivalent of Rs. 10,500/–, was invested in 1808 with the British East India Company by Mar Thoma VII, the then Syrian metropolitan, as a permanent deposit fetching 8% annual interest. As to the source of this money, C. Agur is of the opinion that though part of it was collected from the community by the metropolitan, a larger share was obtained through the good offices of the resident.[1] The amount was expected to yield a yearly income for carrying on service programmes for the benefit of the community. The amount is too insignificant for the purpose from our point of view today, but the fact is that in the 19th century when a bag of rice containing a quintal of the commodity cost hardly Rs. 5/– it was indeed substantial.

Col. Munro who succeeded Macaulay in 1810 had hoped that it would be possible in course of time to work out a way for this Indian Church to cooperate with the Anglican Church. In any case, among the various ways in which he sought to help the Syrian community, his involvement in the founding of the old seminary as an institution of learning for Syrian Christian clergy, and the implementation of a plan of collaboration of the Church Missionary Society (the C.M.S.) of the Anglican Church in the work of the Malankara Syrian Church, deserve mention here. Of these two programmes, the seminary was founded in 1815, but it had to pass through long periods of painful strain and inactivity both in the 19th and in the 20th centuries. The programme of missionary cooperation led to the unfortunate divisions in the Church. It was in fact the after-effects of those sorrowful developments that had been plaguing the community at the time when Vattaseril Geevarghese was born.

) **The Founding of the Seminary**

The Malankara Syrian Church had no educational institution for ne training of candidates to priesthood. They had been receiving nstruction from individual malpans, so that there was no way of ffering them an all-round education. To remedy this defect was a eal need of the Church. In the second decade of the 19th century a enior priest of the Church, Pulikottil Joseph kathanar from Kunnamulam, took the initiative and started the work on his own in 1813. eeing it, Munro was impressed and encouraged him by securing for im from Rani Lakshmibai, the then ruler of Travancore, 16 acres of ax-free land, Rs. 20,000/-, the timber needed for the construction nd other grants. This queen who ruled the country from 1810 to 1815 had Munro as her dewan or chief minister for a time, so that he could manage to obtain such assistance for the Syrian Church from the Rani. Besides, Munro made it possible for Joseph kathanar to draw the nterest on the deposit money which had been lying accumulated for three years, since Mar Thoma VII had received it for one year following the investment in 1808.

Thus by 1815 the seminary began functioning. Soon the resident came to realize that according to the original stipulation the recepient of the interest had to be the metropolitan of the Syrian Church, and that the seminary needed competent persons to undertake teaching work in it. In order to get over the first hurdle, he felt that Joseph kathanar should be raised to the episcopate. The only bishop available at that time who could lend cooperation to perform the consecration was the Syrian metropolitan of Anjur or Thozhiyur. He was requested by the resident to extend his assistance and he readily agreed. Joseph kathanar was consecrated as Mar Dionysius II by Mar Philoxenos II of Anjur in 1816, after he was duly elected by the community.

The question concerning the validity of the priestly succession maintained in the Anjur Church was now raised by persons like the malpan of Konat. Priests of the Konat family were on the whole conversant with the Syriac language and West Syrian or Antiochene Syrian ecclesiastical traditions, but many of them lacked a proper vision of the Church and their theological understanding was limited. Consequently, in dealing with Church matters, they often aggravated problems instead of trying to solve them. As to the Anjur Church,

its history goes back to the early seventies of the 18th century. In 1772 Mar Gregorios, a bishop from Syria who had come to India in 1751 and been living in Kerala ever since, raised to the episcopal rank a remban or monk-priest of the Kattumangattu family as Mar Kurillos. The new bishop tried to oust Mar Dionysius I, the then metropolitan[2], and to establish himself in his place, but failed. The governments of Travancore and Cochin, which were approached for a ruling by the concerned parties, decided the issue against Mar Kurillos. He and his people now moved to Anjur, a place in British Malabar, and settled down there as an independent Church, following the same tradition in faith, worship and ecclesiastical life in general as the Antiochene Syrian Church or the Malankara Syrian Church itself. The Anjur Church continued by having its one bishop consecrate his successor before his death. Mar Philoxenos II who helped the Malankara Syrian Church between 1816 and 1829 and whose successor was consecrated by metropolitan Mar Dionysius IV was the fifth successor of Mar Kurillos.

The issue concerning the validity of orders of the Anjur Church is indeed a delicate one. As we shall see, during the 17th and 18th centuries the Malankara Syrian Church had difficulty in obtaining three or more bishops for the consecration of its metropolitan in literal fulfilment of the canonical quorum, so that the metropolitans of the period were raised to the episcopal rank, each of them by his predecessor or an Antiochene Syrian bishop who happened to be in the country. This situation continued till the consecration of the last Mar Thoma in 1816. It is the same practice that the Anjur Church maintained in its episcopal succession. The insistence that at least three bishops should participate in the consecration of a new bishop goes back to the council of Nicea in 325 A.D. The ruling adopted there shows[3] clealy that the concern behind it was the preservation of the Church's unity. However, the fact is that before 325 no such ruling had been followed in the Church, and even after that time whenever emergency arose, without prejudice to the principle, all church traditions have waived the injunction. The first Roman Catholic Indian bishop Mar Alexander Parambil, for instance, was consecrated by only one bishop in 1663, but he was accepted by the community, and moreover by Rome in keeping with the norm of that Church. But from the Antiochene Syrian side there was another insistence. It was that for valid consecration the patriarch in person

or his nominee should participate in the ceremony as part of the canonical quorum[4]. Thus those who questioned the validity of the episcopal standing of Mar Philoxenos II of Anjur, whether consciously or unconsciously, had been either influenced by the Antiochene Syrian point of view or possibly led by an uncritical veneration for the physical touch of a Syrian ecclesiastic.

c) **The C.M.S. Mission of Help**

As part of his programme of assistance to the Malankara Syrian Church Col. Munro requested the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England to divert a few of its missionary personnel designed for foreign service as a 'Mission of Help to the Syrians'. The Society responded and between 1816 and 1818 four missionaries arrived in Travancore.

This incident had a history that can be traced to the first decade of the 19th century, when Col. Colin Macaulay was the resident. In 1806 two representatives of the Anglican Church visited Travancore and many churches in the state. Dr. Claudius Buchanan, the first of them, was provost of Fort William College, Calcutta, and the other was Dr. Richard Hall Kerr, Anglican chaplain of Madras. It was to Dr. Buchanan that metropolitan Mar Dionysius I handed over an ancient manuscript copy of the Syriac Bible, which he got printed and copies of which made available for distribution in the churches of the Syrian communion. Besides, both men were eager for a collaboration between the Anglican Church and the Malankara Syrian Church, and thereby help the latter to grow into a strong community to take up the Church's missionary task effectively in India. They shared the idea with the metropolitan who expressed himself in its favour, but insisted that the collaboration should not in any way tamper with the faith of the Church or the integrity of its priestly succession. Neither side however went into the details of the way the cooperation was to be worked out, and Dr. Buchanan on his part made it clear that the discussion was informal as he had no authorization from his Church to enter officially into it.

In 1815 Munro took the intiative in asking the C.M.S. for missionaries and they, as we have seen, began to come from 1816. They were well received by the Church at a function held at Mavelikara on 3 December 1818. Yet both sides had misgivings from the beginning.

The missionaries on their part suggested that a committee of representatives should take up the question of introducing appropriate changes in the traditions of worship and life as they were being maintained in the Church[5], but many in the assembly were not in agreement with the suggestion. However, Mar Dionysius III cooperated with the missionaries till his death in 1825.

In 1818 Mar Dionysius III succeeded Mar Dionysius II who had departed this life in 1816, having been consecrated by the same Mar Philoxenos II who had raised Mar Dionysius II to the episcopate. About two months later he presided over the meeting at Mavelikara to accord a welcome to the missionaries. But he died of cholera in 1825. His successor was Mar Dionysius IV, who also was consecrated by Mar Philoxenos himself. The two men worked together in looking after the Church, till the latter passed away in 1829. The resident of the time supported them.

Meanwhile, the section of people and clergy in the Church who disliked the programme of cooperation became restless. Since it had the support of the residents, they did not want to come out in the open against it. They did however appeal to the patriarch in Syria to send a bishop and take control of the Church.[6]

The connection of the Malankara Syrian Church with the Antiochene Syrian Church goes back to 1665, when a bishop of that communion, Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem, had come to Kerala. Since then there were episcopal visits to Kerala from the Syrian Church, but the question of the Indian Church accepting the jurisdiction of the Syrian patriarch of Antioch was not raised till the middle of the 18th century. Then it was insisted on, and the metropolitan of the time, Mar Thoma V, quietly waived it. At the same time, as we shall see more clearly later, there came to be formed a party within the Church which favoured the position. However, since 1794 there had come to Kerala only one Syrian bishop. This was Mar Dioscorus, but he was deported by the government within a year of his arrival in 1808, in response to complaints that he misappropriated the funds of churches he visited. All this time the Malankara Syrian Church was carrying on with its services on its own, without any reference to the patriarch. It was during this period that the Church accepted the services of the missionaries.

Now when a party in the Church called for his aid, the patriarch got the opportunity for involving himself in its affairs and he sent a bishop in 1825. This was Mar Athanasius who arrived in Kerala after the death of Mar Dionysius III, while the Church was being looked after by Mar Dionysius IV and Mar Philoxenos II. Mar Athanasius saw the resident and presented to him his credentials. Without granting him permission to exercize any authority in the Church, the resident allowed him to visit parish churches. But he, counting on the support of the party who had appealed to the patriarch, tried to force his way into the seminary and bring it under his control. Calling in question the validity of orders of the two Indian bishops, he sought to reconsecrate them as the agent of the patriarch. This indeed was too much to be expected of a bishop or the patriarch who delegated him who had no share either in the building up of the seminary or in the life of the Indian Church so far. With the approval of the Indian bishops, Mar Athanasius was asked by the government to leave India, within a year of his arrival.[7]

d) The Failure of the Mission

The effort of those who stood behind the foreign bishop sustained a hard blow in his expulsion. But as time passed, they came to realize that it was possible for them to bring Mar Dionysius IV to their side. By now ill-feeling between the missionaries and the Church people had become pronounced. The early batch of missionaries had come to be replaced by new ones, some of whom were impatient that no reform could yet be worked out in the Church. The Church people, on the other hand, were displeased that there was even a talk of introducing changes in the traditions of the Church at all. Since the metropolitan was on their side, the conservatives were sufficiently strengthened to go forward in their plan.

When matters came to this state, some of the leading members of the Anglican communion in India saw need for a negotiated settlement of the issue. This however had little success in the beginning. In the end in 1835 bishop Daniel Wilson of Calcutta came down to Travancore and proposed six points for consideration by the metropolitan. They were all apparently reasonable[8], but the Church saw in them an attempt to violate its integrity by a body that wielded political power in the country. Without giving an answer by himself, Mar Dionysius IV placed the matter before a general assembly of the Church, which he

called to meet at Mavelikara in the month of January 1836. It was indeed at the same place that in 1818 the missionaries had been formally welcomed. The assembly gave its decision, which is known as the *Mavelikara Padiyola*. It said:[9]

> We are Jacobite Syrians subject to the Patriarch of Antioch, observing the Church rites and rules established by the prelates sent by his command. We cannot therefore deviate from them.

Referring to the cooperation with the missionaries, the *Padiyola* pointed out that

> as no one possesses authority to preach and teach the doctrines of one religion in the Church of another without the sanction of its Patriarch, we cannot permit the same.

The outcome of the Mavelikara assembly was obviously detrimental to the experiment of collaboration between the Malankara Syrian Church and the missionaries. It had three consequences. One, the programme was called off. At that time a small body of Syrian Christians in a number of places asked to be admitted into the Anglican communion, and the missionaries received them. In fact, in 1837 the missionaries formally broke off their connection with the Syrian Church. Since then they began to direct their attention to a programme of evangelistic work among the non-Christians, particularly backward class people. By this they laid the foundation of a diocese of the Church of England in central Travancore, which eventually materialized.

Two, the missionaries put up a claim on the assets gained for the Malankara Syrian Church during the 19th century. As the parties could not agree, the matter was submitted to an arbitration committee consisting of three Europeans, who gave their verdict in April 1840. The Cochin Award, as it is known, was felt by the Syrian metropolitan to favour the missionaries unduly, and he refused to accept it. As his appeal was ignored by the government of Madras, he raised the matter to the Court of Directors in England. They judged the Award to be irregular and directed the parties concerned to approach the court of law for a ruling. But before this directive could be acted upon, the resident had implemented the Award.[10] We have no way of ascertaining how the resident did actually carry this out.

Three, though the opponents of the missionaries stood by the resolution of 1836, there was another section of people in the Church who would not go by it. The latter body began to organize a movement to work for the reform of the Church from within it, obviously along the lines perferred by the missionaries. Initiated by Abraham malpan of Maramon, who had been a teacher of Syriac at the seminary, and his associates, this movement planned to introduce a number of changes in the holy Qurbana service and other forms of worship, as well as to drop some of the customs that had come into vogue in the Church. The result was a division in the Church, which led to factions among people and litigation in court. It was this situation that prevailed in the community when Vattaseril Geevarghese was born in 1858.

e) The Story of the Division in the Beginning

In his eagerness to suppress the reform movement Mar Dionysius IV aggravated the problem by excommunicating its leaders. But they, without yielding to the provocation, made up their minds to strike back. They knew that the Antiochene Syrian patriarch whom the conservative wing had approached in 1825 was possible to be contacted by them as well, with the same old story that Mar Dionysius IV had not been properly raised to the episcopate, and that the Church of Malabar had been going on for a long time without a valid succession of priesthood.[11] They selected deacon Mathews of Maramon, a nephew of Abraham malpan, as their candidate for consecration as metropolitan and sent him to Mardin in 1841. Patriarch Elias II readily consecrated him as Mar Athanasius, when he was hardly twenty-three years old. He was in fact the first Indian national ever to be ordained to any rank in the clergy by an Antiochene Syrian patriarch.

Mathews Mar Athanasius came back to Travancore on 17 May 1843. On arrival, he sought to obtain the support of the community. Mar Dionysius IV, on his part, was keen to find some flaw in the standing of the new bishop. With this aim in mind, he took the initiative and convened a synod of representatives from churches at Kandanad. This meeting was expected to have the *staticon,* or the letter of authorization, which the patriarch may have given to Mar Athanasius read. Suspecting foul play, the new bishop refused to show the *staticon,* and the meeting ended in failure. After thirty days,

another assembly was held at Kallungathara. Attended by representatives from 22 parish churches which favoured Mar Athansius, this gathering discussed the matter and produced a document, known as the *Kallungathara Padiyola,* with the words at the beginning[12] "A meeting of Metropolitan Mar Athanasius and churches including Angamaly and Niranam, which are under the control of the Father of fathers, the Patriarch of Antioch". With this backing, Mar Athanasius approached the authorities, making three claims. One, the patriarch of Antioch from whom he had received the episcopal consecration was indeed the head of the Malankara Syrian Church, and that therefore Mar Athanasius had the right to govern the Church. Two, Mar Dionysius IV who currently occupied the position, as he had not been consecrated by the patriarch, had no right to hold it. Three, Mar Dionysius should therefore be expelled from the office which he keeps to himself unauthorizedly, in favour of Mar Athanasius.

From 1843 Mathews Mar Athanasius made not less than nine representations to this effect, but with no success.[13]

Mar Dionysius now found himself in a state of dilemma. He came to realize that the only way to strengthen himself was to win the patriarch over to his side. How then could he do this consistently? Had he not requested the English authorities in 1826 for the expulsion from India of the Syrian bishop Mar Athanasius whom the patriarch had deputed, on the ground that the patriarch had no authority over the Indian Church? Then in 1829 had he not, without any reference to the patriarch, consecrated for the Anjur Church a successor for Mar Philoxenos II? Again, did he not argue against Mathews Mar Athanasius in a letter written to the Kottarakara church in 1843 that the new bishop should not be accepted, as he would surrender the Indian Church to the patriarch in Syria?[14]

The *Mavelikara Padiyola* of 1836, which acknowledged the patriarch as the head of the Indian Church brings out another profile in the character of Mar Dionysius IV. From about 1843 he may have made up his mind to follow the line adopted by the assembly of 1836. The bishop now wrote to the head of the Antiochene Syrian Church making in effect the following four points. One, Mar Athanasius whom the patriarch had consecrated in 1842 did not represent the Indian Church, as he was the leader of a reform movement which

stood to change it. Two, in consecrating him for the Indian Church, the patriarch had committed a serious mistake. Three, the bishop in the Indian Church who was loyal to the patriarch and the faith of the Church was none other than Mar Dionysius himself. Four, the error made by the patriarch in consecrating Mar Athanasius should be corrected, and the patriarch should do it soon.[15]

By then the patriarch who had consecrated Mar Athanasius died. His successor, Mar Jacob II, was now in difficulty. He was, on the one hand, disturbed that his predecessor had gone wrong in his expectation about Mar Athanasius, but on the other he was relieved that he could take control of the Indian Church through Mar Dionysius whom his predecessor had suspected of disloyalty. The new patriarch now sent a Syrian bishop, Joachim Mar Kurillos, firstly to enquire into the situation in the Church, and secondly if the situation was indeed favourable to advance the claim that as the patriarch's nominee he was the legitimate metropolitan of the Indian Church.

Mar Kurillos reached Kerala in 1846. He had brought with him, in addition to letters of introduction from the patriarch, blank papers with the seal of the patriarch which he could fill in, according to need, in his pursuit for safeguarding patriarchal interests.[16] When he reached Kerala, the issue between Mar Dionysius IV and Mathews Mar Athanasius, as to who should be recognized as the legitimate metropolitan of the Malankara Church, was being hotly debated in concerned circles. The atmosphere was tense, and Dionysius on his part, feeling that he could not match the young metropolitan Athanasius who had the support of the resident, committed a grave blunder. He surrendered the royal proclamation which he possessed from 1825, by which the king had acknowledged his right to hold the office, in favour of the Syrian bishop Mar Kurillos.[17] The latter now filled in one of the blank papers with the seal of the patriarch to the effect that the head of the Church appointed him as the Metropolitan of Malankara. In agreement with Mar Dionysius, Mar Kurillos approached the authorities for their approval of the position. Now the issue was to be fought between Mar Athanasius and Mar Kurillos, instead of between the former and Mar Dionysius.

The government appointed a committee to study the respective claims of both parties. This committee met at Quilon and gave its decision in March 1848. By that time the resident had implemented

the Cochin Award which Mar Dionysius IV had not accepted. As we have noted, the legal basis of the resident's action here is not known. The Quilon committee rejected the claims of Mar Kurillos on two grounds. One, that the document stating that the patriarch appointed him as metropolitan over the Church of Malabar was not authentic, as its contents had not been produced by the patriarch in person. Two, that as a foreigner, Mar Kurillos had no right to be the leader of the Indian Church. Since Mar Dionysius IV had given his resignation, he had no claim for the committee to consider. Apparently, in these circumstances, the committee judged that Mar Athanasius should be declared the metropolitan, and that the Royal Proclamation be issued in his favour. Utram Tirunal Marthanda Varma complied with the decision in July 1852.

The tradition whereby the king issued a proclamation confirming a person as the head of the Syrian Church goes back to 1816, when Mar Dionysius II was raised to the episcopate by Mar Philoxenos II. This consecration implied a departure from the time-honoured custom of acclaiming a member of the Pakalomattam family as the community's leader. Col. Munro who worked behind the plan was eager that the new bishop should be accepted by the whole community, without being opposed by traditionalists, and he obtained for Mar Dionysius II a proclamation from the then ruler of Travancore, Rani Gauri Lakshmibai, enjoining on all concerned to obey him. This then became a custom, so that after him Mar Dionysius III and Mar Dionysius IV received it from Rani Gauri Parvatibai. Now in 1852 Mathews Mar Athanasius was honoured by it, possibly in consequence of Mar Dionysius IV's ill-conceived resignation of his position. However, as we shall see, the state stopped the practice in 1875, in the days of Ayilyam Tirunal Maharaja.

While Joachim Mar Kurillos was immersed in his conflict with Mathews Mar Athanasius, there came to Kerala another Syrian bishop Mar Stephanos in 1849, with letters from the patriarch authorizing him to govern the Church in cooperation with Mar Dionysius IV and Mar Kurillos. He approached the resident for state recognition of his position as the nominee of the patriarch, but the resident turned down his application on the ground that a foreigner had no right to occupy any administrative status in the Indian Church. Without yielding to the order, the Syrian bishop visited churches and aroused

commotion among people. Now he was asked to leave the states of Travancore and Cochin. He however made his way to London and appealed to the authorities there, on the resident's decree. Though Mar Stephanos did not return to Kerala, the authorities in London passed on to the resident a directive that he should observe strict neutrality in matters concerning the Syrian Church.

It is interesting to note in this context that neither the patriarch himself, nor either of the two Syrian bishops deputed by him, required of Mar Dionysius IV that he should be reconsecrated in his episcopal rank, as the Syrian bishop Mar Athanasius had done in 1825. This fact shows that the question which worried the leaders of the Antiochene Syrian Church with reference to the Indian Church, was not the validity of orders as such, but that the supremacy of the patriarch should be admitted by the latter. When, for instance, Mar Dionysius IV agreed to acknowledge the patriarch's authority, they were satisfied. Without saying a word about the validity or otherwise of his episcopal standing, they made common cause with him, and fought against Mar Athanasius whose episcopal title they had no way of questioning.

The Quilon committee's judgment did not unite the Church. It did, on the other hand, strengthen Mathews Mar Athanasius, who now attained the zenith of his glory. Many churches which till then resisted him now came under his administration. The party opposed to him was in difficulties. Mar Dionysius IV who had lost his position as a result of his own short-sighted action could not be of much help in guiding it. In fact, he left this world in October 1855, after receiving the last rites from none other than Mathews Mar Athanasius himself. Even Mar Kurillos is reported to have served for a time as the latter's suffragan.[18] It should be remembered that Mar Athanasius had not identified himself with the reform party and left the 'Jacobite' communion, so that there is nothing unorthodox about these incidents.

But then things changed. The instruction which the directors of the East India Company issued to the resident that he should not take sides in matters concerning the Syrian Church, came to be reported in Kerala in 1857. Soon Mar Kurillos started organizing a party against Mar Athanasius. Then in 1863 the government of Travancore notified that those who were opposed to the reform might feel free to organize themselves as a separate body and build churches of their own,

without interfering with the Church administration of Mar Athanasius. Now a number of new churches were put up in different parts, and civil cases were filed in courts in order to release the old churches from the control of Mar Athanasius. This movement gradually gained strength under the leadership of Joachim Mar Kurillos assisted by a young priest, Pulikottil Joseph kathanar, who should be distinguished from the person of the same name, who from 1813 had engaged himself in the founding of the old seminary, and who was consecrated metropolitan later.

This Joseph kathanar who was born in 1833 and ordained as priest by Joachim Mar Kurillos in 1853 served the bishop as his secretary. He did also take up the responsibility of looking after the various cases in court, in which the bishop was petitioner. Between 1853 and 1864 his efforts in this direction brought no substantial gain for his party, because Mar Athansius enjoyed a number of privileges through the royal proclamation. Experience made two things clear to him during this period. One, that the party opposed to the reform movement had no chance of success unless it had a native bishop as its leader; and two, that so long as Mar Athanasius had the royal proclamation in his favour, he could not be subdued by any one.

How to get over these two hurdles was now the concern of the party that favoured the leadership of Mar Kurillos. To find a solution to the first, they chose Joseph kathanar as their candidate for consecration as metropolitan. In 1864 he was sent to Amida, or Diarbeker, in Syria, where patriarch Jacob II had his residence then, with all necessary recommendations. Mar Jacob II, the successor of Mar Elias II who had consecrated Mathews Mar Athanasius in 1842 raised Joseph kathanar to the episcopal rank as Mar Dionysius V, and sent him back to Kerala in 1865.

The Malankara Syrian Church was now truly divided between the party headed by Mathews Mar Athanasius and those who followed Mar Dionysius V. Each of them sought to gain for his party the upper hand in the conflict. The dispute between them continued till 1889.

f) Division in the Later Stage

The party under the leadership of Joachim Mar Kurillos thus got over the first hurdle which it had to cross. They had Joseph Mar

Dionysius, Dionysius V, as their Indian bishop, an enthusiastic leader. Now it had to get over the second barrier. This however was not easy. The problem was that from the point of view of the state, Mathews Mar Athanasius was the legitimate metropolitan of the Malankara Syrian Church, and the British resident who could wield a great deal of authority in administrative matters, supported him without any reservation. To bring him down from his position of leadership, was now the goal which Mar Dionysius V set himself to pursue.

Soon after his return from the patriarch, Joseph Mar Dionysius took up the task of pulling down Mar Athanasius. The first thing which he did was to approach the dewan, or prime minister, of Travancore with a petition that the royal proclamation should be cancelled. This effort did not succeed, as the resident was there ready to intervene. The dewan answered the metropolitan by asking him to file his petition in a court of law and obtain the remedy for his grievance. Mar Dionysius now moved a court in one of the districts. The answer which he received from there was that, so long as the royal proclamation was in force, the court was not in a position to admit a suit against its beneficiary. Mar Dionysius was in a state of dilemma, without knowing how to proceed. However, he continued in his effort to gain his end by taking the issue in different courts, in the hope that at least in one of them he would meet with success.

Mar Dionysius V carried on his fight till 1874 with the moral support of Joachim Mar Kurillos. But in that year the Syrian bishop died, leaving the Indian bishop under a severe loss. Driven to the extremity of dejection, Mar Dionysius now made up his mind to strike the final blow. This was to request the patriarch himself to come to Kerala and set things right. The patriarch was more than happy to accept the invitation and visit India. This was indeed the first time that an Antiochene Syrian patriarch ever set foot on Indian soil.

Patriarch Mar Jacob II who had consecrated Mar Dionysius V in 1865 was succeeded by patriarch Peter III. An able administrator, the new patriarch took advantage of the opportunity given him to achieve the plan with reference to the Indian Church, which his predecessors had not so far succeeded in accomplishing. Mar Dionysius, on his part, made available to the patriarch in Syria an amount of

500/- pounds sterling for his travel. This itself was a very substantial sum in those times. Besides, when the patriarch returned to his country, he could take with him a much larger amount of money from parish churches, individual persons and the common funds of the Church. In fact, by his visit, the patriarch was the gainer in every way, and the Indian Church the real loser.

Patriarch Peter III arrived in South India in 1875, accompanied by metropolitan Abdullah Mar Gregorios and the usual monks in his entourage. A religious head in the then Turkish empire, the patriarch took with him necessary credentials from political leaders in Istambul and came to India through London. From the capital of the British Empire he could obtain, on the strength of the credentials from the Turkish capital, letters to the authorities in India. In fact, on arrival in India, he could gain his points from the government. Thus the coming of the patriarch and the way he accomplished his mission, made a deep impression on the people as a whole. For one thing, he succeeded in eliciting a state ruling, which cancelled once for all the tradition of issuing a royal proclamation in favour of the Malankara-Metropolitan.

Following this event, the patriarch convened a synod of representatives, both clergy and laity, from every parish at Mulanthuruthy in June 1876. Through this assembly he obtained from the Malankara Syrian Church an official acknowledgement of his supremacy over it. It is obvious that the delegates did not bother to examine the implications of the decisions adopted by the synod, against the background of their long history as the Indian Church of St. Thomas. The patriarch, on his part, was keen that the synod adopted resolutions, admitting that the Malankara Syrian Church was from the beginning a part of the historic Church of Antioch, and agreeing to continue with it in future. Thus at one stroke patriarch Peter III got what his predecessors from about the middle of the 18th century had been struggling in vain to obtain. The question whether it was possible to defend this standpoint in the light of history or not, did not apparently weigh with either the patriarch himself or the church representatives who met in synod at Mulanthuruthy in 1876.

As we shall see, from 1751 Antiochene Syrian fathers had been striving hard to bring the Church of Malabar officially under the supremacy of their patriarch. Their failure from those times was now

ot over by patriarch Peter III after a century and a quarter. The Church came to be faced with conflicts from within. The party that dopted a conservative line, which was eager to keep out the supporters of the reform, saw in the patriarch a dependable ally and a source of trength. It made common cause with him in keeping to exclude its pponents from the fellowship of the Church.

Vattaseril Geevarghese was eighteen years old when the synod was eld at Mulanthuruthy. Though he is not likely to have played any pecial role in that assembly, he identified himself completely with its tandpoint concerning patriarchal supremacy over the Church of Malabar. In fact, he was admitted to the clergy in one of the minor orders a few months after the synod, by patriarch Peter III himself. Mulanthuruthy did, to be sure, rally a large part of the Syrian Christian community of Kerala round metropolitan Mar Dionysius V, who endeared Geevarghese to himself.

The split in the community had come to be final. Neither side n the conflict appeared to be interested in a *rapprochement,* but each ried to weaken the other by carrying on its systematic propaganda, as well as by continuing a vigorous legal battle in law courts. The court cases, as we have already noted, came practically to an end in 1889, with the judgment given by the Royal Court of Appeal, which favoured the point of view adopted by Mar Dionysius V. The other side had to withdraw and organize itself as the Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

The Synod of Mulanthuruthy and the judgment of the Royal Court of Appeal were important events affecting the future of the Church of Malabar. The first, as we have seen, accepted the patriarch's jurisdiction over the Indian Church, which till then it had not formally admitted. The judgment of the Royal Court was in agreement with the position adopted by Mulanthuruthy. The majority judges referred in substantiating their argument to a number of incidents of earlier periods upto 1751 in their support. We shall come back to them later. However, one of the three judges constituting the panel, W. Ormsby, disagreed with his colleagues and issued his judgment separately. In his view the Church of Malabar was an independent community, over which the patriarch had no legitimate authority. He made out that the book on the history of the Malankara Syrian Church by Ittoop writer, which loomed large in the proceedings of the case in favour of the

position held by Mar Dionysius V, did not deserve any reckoning, as the author was not a historian but only a merchant's clerk who made a number of confusions in his treatment.[19] Even the majority judges decreed only that the patriarch's authority consisted in an over-all spiritual supervision in the Malankara Syrian Church, and not in a temporal jurisdiction. But patriarch Peter III, on hearing of the judgment, expressed his disapproval in eloquent terms.[20] He was, to be sure, keen to assert both temporal and spiritual jurisdiction over the Indian Church. We shall see that it was this demand which patriarch Mar Abdullah renewed with added strength and determination in the 20th century, that dragged Mar Dionysius VI into a long period of struggle.

One other point traceable to the royal court judgment, which created problem later, had reference to the question of the book of canon laws. Here the issue was, and still is, extremely complicated. The truth of the matter is that, whatever the situation may have been in earlier times, there was no book officially recognized and followed in the Church of Malabar during the 19th century. The Antionchene Syrian fathers who came to Kerala from the latter half of the 17th century may have brought with them copies of the book of *Hudaya,*[21] compiled by Gregorios Bar Ebraya in the 13th century. But it had received no publicity in the Church, so that in the 19th century practically no one referred to it in times of need. The Church lived on its traditions, which were not recorded. As regards the authority of the patriarch, the fact is that the book of *Hudaya* specified no clear injunction binding on the Church in general, none whatsoever referring to the Indian Church whether in spiritual or in temporal matters. Therefore in the 19th century law suits this book could not be of use to the party of Mar Dionysius, as it was keen to establish spiritual authority for the patriarch over the Church of Malabar, in opposition to the party of Mar Athanasius which by then had come to question it.

In the law suit, however, the contending parties of both Mar Dionysius V and Mar Athanasius had to produce the law book binding on the Church of Malabar as a whole, on the strength of which the court was expected to pronounce its judgment. The party of Mar Athanasius now produced a book claiming that it had been followed in the Church.[22] The court however rejected it and admitted the book produced by the party of Mar Dionysius as the one which had

uided the Church. That was however a work which was made up n Kerala for the immediate need of presenting to the court only. t contained most of the book of the *Hudaya,* but had several additions nd alterations incorporated with the deliberate purpose of arguing wo points. One, that the patriarch had spiritual authority in the Church; and two, that in other matters the position represented by Mar Dionysius was the one followed in the Church, and not that maintained by the reform party.

g) The Church Under the Patriarch

The Synod of Mulanthuruthy which met in 1876 placed on record he view, that 'the Jacobite Syrian Church of Malabar' had from ncient times unity and connection with other Syrian churches under he jurisdiction of the apostolic see of Antioch. The synod affirmed urther that the Antiochene see should be common to all these churches, nd that the *majilis* (church committee) in Syria and the *majilis* in Kerala should have equal standing. These resolutions adopted by the ynod in order to continue this relationship deserve notice.[22]

One, that in the Church of Malabar there should be a Syrian Christian Association, with the patriarch as patron and the metropolitan as president, and a committee consisting of members chosen rom the association, with the metropolitan as president.

Two, that every parish church in Kerala should prepare a registered deed with signatures from all members, expressing loyalty to the see of Antioch and 'the Jacobite Syrian faith'. A copy of this deed should be made available to the patriarch and the original should be kept in the church concerned.[24]

Three, that from every parish church an annual payment in money should be collected, from each male member, and sent to the patriarch.

The patriarch may well have hoped that, before he left India, these resolutions would be implemented and the Church as a whole, would soon come under his absolute control. But this did not happen, and he suspected that the distinterest of the metropolitan was its cause. In consequence of this feeling, patriarch Peter III began to engage himself in subtly degrading Mar Dionysius. He did two things on his own, without the cooperation of the metropolitan. One, he tried to obtain the registered deeds from the churches which he visited,

acknowledging his absolute authority over them. His success in this endeavour, however, was very limited. In a small number of churches, where the trustees and their committees had been interested in keeping to their hold even against the wishes of the majority of members, the ruling party submitted to the patriarch the registered deeds,[25] hoping thereby to gain their end. This action did not, as a matter of fact, represent the concerned churches, and the patriarch had no legitimate right to claim it as a triumph of his cause. Two, the patriarch divided the Church of Malabar into seven dioceses, and consecrated six metropolitans, so that they and Mar Dionysius, each could be in charge of one of them. The new bishops were required by the patriarch, before they were consecrated, to submit to him registered deeds as dictated by him, agreeing to acknowledge his authority implicitly. In this plan Peter III was successful; for all the candidates to the episcopal rank complied with his demand. Here also, the success of the patriarch was partial, as Mar Dionysius V did not respond to him favorably.

The patriarch was however shrewd enough to preclude the possibility of these Indian bishops meeting as an episcopal synod under one of them as president. He did, to be sure, recognize Mar Dionysius V not as the Malankara Metropolitan, but only as the President of the Association. Like other metropolitans, he also had charge of one of the seven dioceses. Mar Dionysius was equally shrewd. He did not only waive aside the question concerning the registered deed, but elicited cooperation from those very bishops whom the patriarch had consecrated. Thus Mar Dionysius V sought to preserve the integrity of the Church, within the limits of his ability and knowledge. When we look back on those days, however, we are drawn to observe that Mar Dionysius V, the great leader that he was, missed a unique chance in not seeing the possibility for, or deliberately refusing to take advantage of, utilizing the collaboration of his episcopal colleagues to work unitedly for the establishment of a catholicate or a patriarchate for the Indian Church, in the same way as other Eastern Churches have done. This is a thought which was not easy for the Church of Malabar to entertain in the 19th century, as it has not been possible for many to appreciate even in the 20th.

From 1876 Mar Dionysius V had memorable success in every way till he left this world in 1909. He worked with a deep sense of dedication for the progress of the community in the field of education and

ocial advancement. He fought against the reform movement out of a conviction that its abandonment of the traditions of the Church was wrong. However, we in our times can very well raise the question: Was there no other way, but to bring in a patriarch from Syria who had no special sympathy for our situation in the Indian context, to find a olution to the problem faced by the Church at that time? Whatever may be the answer to this and other similar questions, the fact should be admitted that it is the after-effects of the painful story of the Malankara Syrian Church during the 19th century that Mar Dionysius VI had to encounter in the 20th century and we ourselves have to witness even today. In fact, Mar Dionysius admitted in a very subtle way, that his predecessor had gone too far in supporting the patriarch.[26]

Patriarch Peter III's effort to take registered deeds as an expression of submission to his authority from candidates for episcopal consecration and parish churches, was a novel thing in the history of the Malankara Syrian Church. No bishop before that time had ever been asked by his consecrator for anything like that. In fact, in the ordination ceremony there is a place for the candidate to read out a statement of faith, including a solemn undertaking on his part to submit himself to ecclesiastical authority. It is, to be sure, in addition to this obligation that patriarch Peter III asked each candidate for episcopal consecration to execute a registered deed before the civil authority. This was indeed unheard of in the history of the Church of Malbar. Equally novel was the patriarch's demand for registered deeds from parish churches. These facts show that the patriarch was a newcomer, who had no connection with the Indian Church so far and that having come in, he was keen to conquer it thoroughly.

How, then, could he come in at all? Having come, how could he wield so much of initiative in the Church? These questions deserve an answer, which may be attempted by looking briefly into the earlier history of the Indian Church.

h) A Glance into Earlier History

The synod of Mulanthuruthy tried to make out, as we have noted, that the connection of the "Jacobite Syrian Church of Malabar" with the see of Antioch goes back to ancient times, though it does not specify to what ancient times that connection does in fact go. There

are three questions which should be raised here. One, how old is the name 'Jacobite' as applied to the Malankara Syrian Church? Two, how old is the connection of the Malakara Syrian Church with Antioch? Three, how old is the name 'Jacobite' as applied to the Antiochene Syrian Church? We have indisputable evidence to answer all these questions. The Malankara Syrian Church did not have 'Jacobite' as part of its name before the 19th century. As regards the foreign relations of the Church of Malabar, the evidence is clear that in 1490 a delegation for bishops was sent by this Church, not to the Syrian patriarch of Antioch, but to the Syrian (Nestorian) patriarch of Babylon.[27] In the 16th century, when the Portuguese Roman Catholics worked among the Syrian Christians of Kerala, they had to deal with Nestorian bishops, not at all with Antiochene Syrian prelates.

Within the limited space available here, it is not possible to discuss in detail the subject of the connection between the Church of Malabar and the see of Antioch. What can be noted is the fact that none of the Antiochene Syrian historians, whose writings have come down to us, refer to as much as a knowledge of the existence of a church in Kerala, let alone of a connection between their Church and the Church of Malabar. Therefore, so long as no probable evidence is brought forward in support of a connection, no historian can ascribe validity to the claim of Mulanthuruthy.

As regards the name 'Jacobite', it is a fact of history that it came to be used derisively of one party in the Antiochene Syrian Church during the sixties of the 6th century by another party in the same Church.[28] Subsequently the name came to be applied to the Antiochene Syrian Church as a whole by its opponents. Later, the members of this Church themselves adopted the name uncritically to their Church itself. It is this last tradition that has come down to Kerala.

Our Evidence of a Connection

We have evidence that in 1665 Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem, an Antiochene Syrian bishop, came to Malabar and a section of the ancient Syrian Christians welcomed him. His visit was in response to appeals from Kerala, and his arrival brought about a turning-point in the history of the Indian Church. In the 16th century, when the Portuguese established their political authority in India, the Church

of Malabar was being looked after by bishops from the 'Nestorian' Church of Persia. But the Indian Church had all along enjoyed its administrative freedom under a native archdeacon, or *Jathikukarthavian* as he had been known.

The patriarch of Babylon, who had sent these bishops, whom a delegation from the Indian Church had approached for bishops in 1490, was the successor of the ancient catholicos of Persia who had his seat at Seleucia, a twin city on the river Tigris, which was the capital of the old Persian empire. The office of the catholicos was the result of an evolution from within the Persian Church, in the same way as patriarchates emerged in the Roman empire. In fact, both of them occupied the same rank in relation to the churches over which they presided. Following the custom of calling the chief ecclesiastics in the Roman empire 'patriarchs', the Persian Church also referred to its catholicos as patriarch as well from the 5th century. However, on account of the political change in the Persian area, the Persian catholicate shifted its seat from Seleucia to Baghdad in the 8th century and from there to North Mesopotamia, broadly called Babylon, in the 13th. Thus he came to be called the Patriarch of Babylon.[29]

The Church of Persia had a history of its own almost from the beginning of Christianity. In the 5th century, however, it officially accepted the council of Nicea of 325 and its creed, both from the Church of the Roman empire.[30] But later in the same century due to different considerations, it adopted two decisions. According to one, the Persian Church made it clear that it would not welcome any foreign intervention in its life, and secondly it took up for an examination of the condemnation of Nestorius by the council of Ephesus in 431. At a council of this Church which met in 486 it adopted a resolution exonerating Nestorius and admitting him as a saint of the Church. For this reason, the Persian Church came to be referred to as 'Nestorian', though its real name is the 'Church of the East'. It is a fact admitted unanimously by all historians who deal with the subject that the Indian Church had its connection with that Church,[31] both before and after it formally acquitted Nestorius of the censure meted out to him in 431.

The Portuguese who, as we have seen, established themselves in South India during the 16th century were Roman Catholic Christians.

They were eager that the connection which the Indian Church had with the Babylonian patriarchate should be substituted by an integration with Rome. Their labour in this direction bore fruit and the synod of Diamper (Udayamperur) of 1599 marks the highest point in their triumph. But this had a reaction, which expressed itself in the famous Oath of the Coonen Cross of 1653. Almost the entire community broke away from the communion of the Roman Catholic archbishop, who was a member of the Society of Jesus. Rome now involved itself directly and in a few years' time more than a half of the community went back to Roman Catholic adherence. The remaining body continued under the guidance of Mar Thoma I, who was succeeded in turn by five leaders bearing the same name till the beginning of the 19th century.

From 1653 the Indian Church continued in a divided state. Of the two communities, it was the one led by Mar Thoma that welcomed Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem in 1665. This Indian ecclesiastic had his episcopal title conferred on him by the laying on of hands by twelve priests, without the participation of a bishop or bishops. Therefore he and the community were eager to have his position regularized by the assistance of an eastern bishop. With this aim mind, Mar Thoma had appealed for the help of several eastern ecclesiastical centres, including Mardin where the Antiochene Syrian patriarch had his seat. The patriarch responded and sent Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem to Malabar. When he arrived, Mar Thoma and the community received him with great jubilation.

It should be observed here that, in thus accepting the services of Mar Gregorios, the Church of Malabar was not coming into the jurisdictional set up of the Antiochene Syrian Church. In order to claim supremacy over the Indian Church, with which he had no connection till then, the patriarch had to get two things done. It was necessary for him, in the first place, to make the Indian Church formally accept him as the supreme head of this Church, as the Portuguese had done in 1599 by extracting submission to Rome from the Indian Church. Secondly, the Church of Malabar should have been made officially to adopt the faith, worship and traditions of the Antiochene Syrian Church. In fact, the second thing was not too difficult to achieve, though it needed time for people to accept the change. Mar Gregorios had obviously begun to work on it, and those

who came after him continued on what he had done.[32] In regard to weaning the Church from Nestorian inclination, the Portuguese had accomplished a substantial amount of spade work by denouncing Nestorianism as a dreadful heresy,[33] and the Church of Malabar had begun to assimilate this standpoint.

To fulfil the first task was not easy. Mar Gregorios does not seem to have taken any step to promote it. After his time there came two ecclesiastical dignitaries in the eighties of the same year. One of them, Mar Baselios Yaldo, was a catholicos. As he died within a fortnight of his arrival, he achieved nothing. The other was Mar Ivanios, who lived in Kerala for a period of about nine years. He also did judiciously avoid the question of patriarchal jurisdiction, though he did much to propagate the faith and traditions of the Antiochene Syrian Church in the Church of Malabar.

) The Development in the 18th Century

During the 18th century three Mar Thoma bishops, namely Mar Thoma IV, Mar Thoma V, and Mar Thoma VI, assumed the leadership of the Church in succession. The first of them, Mar Thoma IV, and his predecessor, Mar Thoma III, had been consecrated by Mar Ivanios who had come from Syria. Before Mar Thoma IV died in 1728, he consecrated Mar Thoma V. Now there was a party in the Church to express dissatisfaction about the episcopal standing of Mar Thoma V, on the ground that his consecration had been performed by only one bishop, and that too by an Indian bishop. This feeling of inadequacy concerning its episcopal succession led the Church to seek assistance from the Syrian patriarch.

To add to this, there arose another problem for the Mar Thoma bishops from the beginning of the 18th century. While Mar Thoma IV was holding his office as the metropolitan of the Church, there came a bishop named Mar Gabriel, who had been sent by the patriarch of Babylon. During the 16th century the Church of Persia had serious internal difficulties. In addition, the bishops from it had to pass through very hard times in India under Portuguese surveillance. Deterred possibly by these experiences, that Church did not send any bishop to India during the 17th century. But in 1708 patriarch Elia of the Persian Church deputed Mar Gabriel to Kerala, and he lived here till his death in 1731. A number of churches and a considerable body

of people from both the Roman Catholic and the Malankara Syrian communions accepted him. He died at Kottayam and was buried at the Cheriapally, where his anniversary feast used to be celebrated every year till the 19th century. Mar Thoma IV did not receive him, neither did his successor, but they had to clash with him, both theologically and administratively. The Mar Thoma bishops however found themselves poorly equipped to meet his challenge, and they appealed to the Antiochene Syrian patriarch to send learned bishops and teachers to Kerala and help the Church. The letters of Mar Thoma IV did not reach their destination and he got no response. But after receiving the communication of Mar Thoma V, the patriarch took action.

In 1751 two Syrian prelates, one a catholicos by name Mar Baselios Sakralla, and the other a metropolitan named Mar Gregorios, were deputed to India by patriarch Mar Geevarghese. They were accompanied by a monk and a few other clergymen. Shortly after arrival, the two prelates consecrated the monk as metropolitan Mar Ivanios, who lived in Kerala till his death in 1794. In sending them, the patriarch had hoped that the Indian leader would submit himself to the foreign dignitaries for the confirmation of his episcopal title. He had in fact despatched through them the *staticon,* letter of authorization, to be given to the Indian metropolitan after the ceremony. In short, the patriarch had expected Mar Thoma V to accept his jurisdiction and show him obedience.[34] However, in spite of the fact that there was a party in the Church who would favour the proposal, Mar Thoma did not submit. In fact, he went further. In 1760 he consecrated by himself Mar Thoma VI as his successor, without asking for the cooperation of the Syrian bishops, all the three of whom were then in Kerala, alive and well. This episode indicates the determination of this Indian bishop to safeguard the freedom of the Church from foreign intervention.

The situation however changed since then. Mar Thoma V died in 1765 and Mar Thoma VI succeeded him. The party in the Church which had raised objection to his predecessor with reference to his consecration by a single Indian bishop could now come out with added strength. The presence with them of the Syrian bishops, two of whom were now alive, and their consistent instigation, would have made things worse. In addition there was the usual Roman Catholic

nunciation that the bishops of the Malankara Syrian Church were
:trans only in name. In the face of all these adverse forces at work
Kerala, Mar Thoma VI, after leading the Church for about five
ars, agreed to a compromise. He submitted himself and agreed to
ve his title confirmed at a ceremony led by Mar Gregorios and
sisted by Mar Ivanios in 1770. Mar Thoma was now given the
w name Dionysius. He is the Mar Dionysius I, the Valia (Great)
ar Dionysius of our history, who died in 1808. It was in fact this
:tropolitan who had discussions with Dr. Claudius Buchanan
d Dr. Richard Kerr of the Anglican Church in 1806. The
ar Gregorios noted here is the same person who in 1772 consecra-
d Mar Kurillos, the first bishop of the Anjur Church.[35]

The incident of 1770, whether Mar Dionysius I meant it in reality
not, gave the impression both in the Church of Malabar and outside
at the metropolitan formally accepted the jurisdiction of the Antio-
ene Syrian patriarch over the Indian Church. For one thing, that
:ident made it possible for the Indian Church to be referred to as
acobite' in the same way as the Antiochene Syrian Church itself.[36]
nother positive evidence in this direction is that in 1809, the second
ccessor of Mar Dionysius I, Mar Thoma VIII, spoke of himself as the
letropolitan of the Malankara Edavaka under the apostolic rule of
ar Ignatius Patriarch of Antioch'.[37] The fact is worth noting that
e prelate did not specify in concrete terms what he meant by this
:scription.

Yet, on the other side, Mar Dionysius I did not ask the patriarch
r permission in undertaking a number of activities during his epi-
opate. Two of them deserve notice here. One, Mar Dionysius I
ntered into negotiations for the unification of the two bodies into
hich the historic Syrian Church of India had become split from the
'th century. Though he was willing to negotiate with Rome and
en make concessions, he did not show any deference to Antioch
this matter. In other words, he had not taken Antioch seriously.
is concern, on the other hand, was the preservation of the Indian
hurch's unity and progress, and not to hold on to Antioch. Two,
is truth about Mar Dionysius is clearer still from the consecration
his successor. He did it by himself and gave the new bishop the
ame Mar Thoma, and not Mar Dionysius or any other. In fact,
: waited till 1796 to accomplish it, by the time the last Syrian bishop

in India, Mar Ivanios, had gone behind the veil. Therefore the attitude of Mar Dionysius I towards patriarchal jurisdiction over the Indian Church was a complex matter indeed!

The fact should be admitted however that from about the middle of the 18th century there were two views prevalent in the Church regarding its foreign connection. One of them favoured a relation with Antioch and the other was not particularly keen about it. The former opted it not in terms of jurisdiction but for a name and a sort of prestige. If the Roman Catholic section for example was integrated with Rome, this section felt that it should take pride in a connection with the ancient see of Antioch though not a full integration with it. That the see of Antioch of old had disappeared from existence from the 6th century, and that the Antiochene Syrian body was only a part of that great centre which itself had lost contact with Antioch altogether. had never come into its knowledge.[38]

The real hope of the Indian Church lay with the body which held the second of the two views noted above. But it had fallen into difficult days from about 1830 and from 1875 it came to be replaced by the first view which was given a boost by the synod of Mulanthuruthy of 1876. It is, in fact, the spiritual bankruptcy of the first view which came to be exposed in the 20th century, and Vattaseril Mar Dionysius was the key person who brought out that fact in its utter poignancy.

CHAPTER TWO

Mar Dionysius VI in History

1. Early Life

It was in the Vattaseril family of Mallappally that Geevarghese was born in 1858. The lad had his early education in Malayalam alphabet and rudiments of arithmetics under a local village teacher. He was then admitted to an elementary school of the area. Mallappally itself offered him facilities for middle school studies and for high school instruction he had to go to Kottayam. In both places there were educational institutions run by the C.M.S., to which Geevarghese and many others like him had recourse for their basic school studies.

While Geevarghese was learning in the C.M.S. High School, Kottayam, patriarch Peter III visited South India. He does not seem to have advanced in secular education beyond a year or so in high school. However, he paid special attention to a study of the English language, so much so that he could read and understand books on religious subjects written in it.[1] In 1876, as we have seen, he was ordained to one of the minor orders in the Church's ministry by patriarch Peter III himself.[2] He then took up a study of the Syriac language and Syrian fathers. In those times a number of manuscripts in Syriac containing the writings of Antiochene Syrian fathers were available in Kerala.[3] Geevarghese read these works under the guidance of metropolitans Mar Gregorios of Parumala and Mar Ivanios Murimattam of Kandanad, who was later made the first catholicos of the Indian Church. This study and experience with two of the senior bishops of the Church helped him in his work in later times. His two literary productions, *A Syriac Text-book for Beginners,* and *Basic Doctrines of Religion,* (*Mathopadeshasarangal* or *Mathasangathikal*) show the influence of his early training in this way.

2. As a Clergyman and Teacher

In 1879 Geevarghese was ordained as a deacon, and in the following year, when he was hardly twenty-one years old, he was made a priest.[4] As deacon, he served Mar Gregorios as his secretary and accompanied

him while he visited churches. This experience brought him in contact with people and clergy in different parts of the Church.

As priest, Father V. J. Geevarghese was involved in a number of activities, both in Church and in Society. In Church, he maintained close connection with Mar Dionysius V, the Malankara Metropolitan, Mar Gregorios of Parumala and Mar Ivanios Murimattam. This association helped him soon to be intimately related to three important institutions in the Church, the Old Seminary, the Parumala Seminary, and the M. D. Seminary.

The oldest of them all was the Old Seminary. Founded, as we have seen, in 1815 as a school to train candidates for the Church's priesthood, it had passed through a number of vicissitudes. From 1850 it came to be in the control of the reform party. Consequently the party opposed to the reform started two other centres, one at Vettickel near Mulanthuruthy, and the other at Parumala. The latter grew into a centre of importance, particularly because of its association with Mar Gregorios who was held in very high esteem in the Church. As deacon, Geevarghese had stayed at the monastery of Vettickel for his Syriac studies under Mar Ivanios Murimattam. But it was with Parumala that he developed more intimacy than with Vettickel. In 1881 Father V. J. Geevarghese was appointed to teach at Parumala. Besides, he served as its manager as well for a period of about thirty years.

Following a high court decision in his favour, Mar Dionysius V could take possession of the old seminary in 1885, ousting the reform party from there. Soon, the teaching programme came to be re-inaugurated at the seminary under malpans V. J. Geevarghese and Mathen of Konat. The former held the post till his consecration as metropolitan in 1909.

Father Geevarghese took his teaching work very seriously. As an aid to students, he brought out the two books we have noted, during that time. The first of them was written so lucidly that even a person with no background in the subject could obtain a substantial grounding in the Syriac language, without the help of a tutor. To this fact, this author can make his own confession, for it was this book which he used as a young man of eighteen years to learn Syriac, and he could do it with practically no external assistance.

Mathopadeshasarangal, which will be noted in the following pages as *The Basic Doctrines,* is a handbook which, taking into consideration the level of theological learning prevalent in the Church in those times, is indeed a praise worthy manual. In the form in which it has been published as a book, this work, which is noted later on, was an enlargement of lecture notes prepared by the author for teaching in the seminary. The book shows that Father Geevarghese had a substantial grounding in the teaching of the Antiochene Syrian Fathers, and that he possessed the ability to communicate his ideas well enough.

A third contribution of Father Geevarghese in the area of Church literature during this period is to be found in the prayer book for use on Sundays, along with the service of the holy Qurbana, the *Qyomtha Namaskaram and Qurbana Kramam.* This was a joint endeavour of the two malpans of the seminary. Previous to its publication, the Sunday worship in the Malankara Syrian churches was used to be conducted in the Syriac language, which neither the people nor most of the priests themselves could follow. To remedy this sad situation, the two malpans made translations of the Syriac forms into Malayalam, with the help of a renowed Hindu language pundit, Kottarathil Sankunny Menon and Kandathil Varghese Mappilla. This book is still in use in the Malankara Syrian parishes on Sundays, with the songs rendered into Malayalam in the Syriac tunes and the prose parts given in prose itself.

The connection of Father Geevarghese with the M. D. Seminary deserves special mention. The school was founded in the name of Mar Dionysius V under his own initiative. To raise funds for its construction a lottery was floated, with governmental approval. Father Geevarghese was in charge of the programme which indeed was a great success. When the school was started, it was the desire of the metropolitan that a clergyman should be in charge of its management. Father Geevarghese was considered the obvious man for the post, and he was appointed as principal and the late K. C. Mammen Mappilla as headmaster. He held the post of principal for about eight years. Meanwhile, Mar Gregorios of Parumala died in 1902, and he relinquished his connection with the M. D. Seminary, which had by then Father P. T. Geevarghese (later Mar Ivanios who embraced the Roman Catholic Church) as principal and headmaster, both in one person.

In 1903, on the first death anniversary of Mar Gregorios, Father Geevarghese was made a monk. Since then he had the old seminary as his permanent residence. While living there, he continued with his teaching work. Besides he looked after the affairs of Parumala and assisted Mar Dionysius V in the fulfilment of his administrative responsibilities in the Church.

It was while serving as principal of the M. D. Seminary that Father Geevarghese played a key role in the social life of the community. As an important centre of the Malankara Syrian people, Kottayam attracted many from different parts of the country, who accepted him as a leader. The starting of the M.G.M. High School at Thiruvella in memory of Mar Gregorios of Parumala, the establishment of a number of primary schools in different places, the founding of the Malankara Syrian *Mahajana Sabha,* the organizing of an association for the clergy of the Church, and so on, go back to this period. Of these, the Malankara Syrian *Mahajana Sabha* deserves special reckoning. Founded in 1879 as a *Samuhia Sammelanam,* it made progress in a few years and assumed the name *Mahajana Sabha.* This association, as we shall see, stood by Mar Dionysius VI in his struggle with patriarch Mar Abdullah in later times.

3. Consecration as Metropolitan

Mar Dionysius V was growing old and his surviving episcopal colleagues shared the same fate. Of the six men whom patriarch Peter III consecrated, five had died, and no step was taken by the Church to replace them. In other words, the arrangement made by the patriarch was not followed up. As we shall see, Mar Abdullah tried to persuade the community to ask for bishops under the excuse of filling vacancies, but the assembly which met to consider such questions did not respond positively, and patriarch Peter's plan died a natural death.

Now, however, the Church had only Mar Dionysius V and Mar Ivanios Murimattam. Though Mar Julius Alvares was also living, since he was not from Kerala, he could not be counted on for services, for the Malayalam speaking people. The necessity for raising new bishops was keenly felt by the Church. Consequently the aged metropolitan called for a meeting of the Malankara Association at the old seminary, Kottayam, in March 1908. Presided over by the metropolitan himself, this assembly of representatives from churches adopted

Saint Mar Gregorios of Parumala

In resolving to send the candidates to the patriarch, the Association had another unexpressed motive. As we have seen, there was an issue between the patriarch and Mar Dionysius V concerning the former's claim of authority over the Indian Church. In seeking to establish it, the patriarch was insisting on every candidate for the episcopal rank to submit to him a registered deed, but the metropolitan was not in agreement with this policy and he had not complied with it.[7] The request of the Association that the candidates might be consecrated without being named for any diocese was a subtle way of getting over the problem. In fact, Mar Dionysius asked the two rembans in addition not to submit to the patriarch any formal document beyond what is stipulated in the order of service for ordination. It is required, as we have already noted,[8] that at the ceremony of consecration the candidate should read out a statement, confessing the faith and acknowledging ecclesiastical authority. It is clear that Mar Dionysius V was keen to safeguard the internal freedom of the Malankara Church.

The two rembans were consecrated on 31 May 1908, as Geevraghese Mar Dionysius, the Dionysius VI of the Malankara Syrian Church, and Paulose Mar Kurillos. Since they were not officially assigned to particular dioceses, the question of their submitting the registered deeds did not arise. Here, it was of course the diplomatic ingenuity of Mar Dionysius V that prevailed, but it had unfortunate consequences which played havoc in the Church in due course.

Patriarch Peter III was eager, as we have seen, to control the Church of Malabar all the way,[9] but he had not conceived of a practical way of implementing his plan. Mar Abdullah was keen to make up the deficiency at this point. He conceived of the plan of appointing a bishop from Syria, whom he could trust, as his delegate in Kerala and arrange for the Indian bishops individually to contact him when necessity arose, only through the delegate.[10] In this way patriarch Abdullah thought that he would succeed in bringing the Indian Church under his direct supervision. In order to work out the idea, Mar Abdullah had a suitable person ready at hand. This was a Syrian monk-deacon, Sleeba, who had lived in Kerala for many years and made friends with people. As he had a sort of working knowledge of the Malayalam language, he could move with people in general. Sleeba had gone to the patriarch and was consecrated as metropolitan Mar Osthathios on the day of Easter of 1908. Mar Abdullah gave

him the *staticon,*[11] assigning to him authority over the Church of Malabar as a whole as the patriarch's delegate, even before the Indian bishops were consecrated.

What then is *staticon?* It is customary at every ordination service for the dignitary who leads the ceremony to name the ordinand to a church or a diocese, as the case may be. After the service, the presiding dignitary gives him a letter specifying the field of his service. With reference to bishops, this authorizing letter is called *Statikon.*

On 31 May 1908, when the Indian monks were consecrated, the patriarch complied with the request of the Malankara Association and avoided naming them to particular dioceses, during the service. However, he was not willing to give the new bishops the customary *staticon,* and more than that, to accede to the Association's request concerning Geevarghese Mar Dionysius. But after some delay, the *staticon* stating the fact of their consecration was given to them, without any indication in the one for Mar Dionysius VI that he was to serve as assistant to Mar Dionysius V with the right of succession. During a discussion on that point which happened on a later occasion between the patriarch and Mar Dionysius in the presence of Sleeba Mar Osthathios, Mar Abdullah expressed his mind clearly. The office of the Metropolitan of Malankara, he said, was not necessary for the Indian Church. Mar Osthathios also had something similar to say on the occasion. He had already received, it should be remembered, the *staticon* specifying his authority over the Indian Church as a whole. Mar Osthathios commented that, if Mar Dionysius was going to be the successor of the senior Mar Dionysius as the Metropolitan of Malankara, there was no need for his (namely 'Osthathios') going to India at all. In other words, the Syrian bishop was being sent to India by the patriarch with the intention of succeeding Mar Dionysius V.[12]

4. As Malankara Metropolitan

The new bishops came back to Kerala and were well received by the Church. Mar Dionysius V was gratified that he could transfer his responsibilities to Mar Dionysius VI and retire from active service. With the Indian bishops, there came also Sleeba Mar Osthathios, the Syrian metropolitan whom patriarch Abdullah had appointed as his delegate in Kerala.

Following the usual receptions accorded to the new metropolitans in various places, they were welcomed formally by the Managing Committee on 26 November 1908.[13] By that time the letter of patriarch Abdullah informing the Church of the consecrations had reached the metropolitan. The meeting recorded the letter and greeted the new prelates, formally approving the appointment of Mar Dionysius VI as assistant to Mar Dionysius V and Mar Kurillos as a metropolitan of the Church. Now the senior metropolitan expresssed his desire to hand over the responsibilities connected with the transaction of the interest on the deposit money with the government, as well as of schools and other matters relating to his portfolio to the assistant. The Committee agreed and the senior metropolitan acted accordingly. In regard to the handling of interest on the deposit money, the decision of the Church was formally communicated to the British resident on 20 May 1909, and the resident notified the matter to the co-trustees, Mathen malpan of Konat and C. J. Kurien of Kottayam. After making all these arrangements, the old metropolitan passed away on 11 July 1909.

Patriarch Abdullah had set out on his Indian visit. At the time when Mar Dionysius V had left his life on earth, Mar Abdullah was in London on his way. The news of the metropolitan's death had to be communicated to him by cable despatched to his London address. He was requested to confirm the appointment of Mar Dionysius VI as the successor, and he readily complied. This action of patriarch Abdullah was appreciated in Kerala, and the Managing Committee held a special meeting on 31 August to discuss how the patriarch was to be received and offered hospitality.

Mar Dionysius VI was given a felicitous welcome by the Church as a whole at a meeting of representatives from every parish on the thirtieth day of the senior metropolitan's death.[14] Presided over by Sleeba Mar Osthathios and attended by a number of leading men in public life, this meeting declared him worthy of holding the Malankara Metropolitan's post and be the President of the Malankara Association. The chairman noted in his presidential address that Mar Dionysius, being elected to the office by the Association and confirmed by the patriarch, had the right to succeed Mar Dionysius V. The chairman did also welcome Paulose Mar Kurillos as a vice-president of the Association, and wished them both divine guidance in their respective spheres of activity.

The fact should be remembered in this connection that the atriarch, in short everything connected with the Antiochene primate, ere held in very high honour, even uncritically by the Church of Malabar as a whole at that time. There was only one area in which he Indian Church would not go all the way in pleasing him. This was he assigning of a diocese or even a parish church to be looked after y a foreign ecclesiastic. Mar Osthathios, for example, had a place f honour in the Church, but to appoint him in charge of a diocese would not be favourably considered almost by anyone.[15] The legal position so far established in court would not allow a foreign national o enjoy administrative responsibility in the Church of Malabar, and he Church would stand by it. Mar Osthathios, to be sure, was eager o be appointed as metropolitan of a diocese, if not of the Church as a whole as the patriarch's delegate. But the Managing Committee which assigned dioceses to metropolitans in August 1909 turned down the man's request in this respect, and he felt sour about it. Patriarch Abdullah was shrewd enough to see that the legal hurdle was possible to be got over, if the community would in a general assembly pass a resolution that the patriarch had, in fact, the authority. To obtain such a resolution was the plan of Mar Abdullah.

At the general assembly of the Church, following Mar Osthathios, two other persons of distinction spoke, paying glowing tribute to the new metropolitan. They were Mathen malpan of Konat, who was a teacher at the seminary with the metropolitan before his elevation to the episcopate and one of the co-trustees with him now, and E. J. John, an esteemed lay member of the Church and a leading advocate of the Travancore High Court. Both of them felicitated Mar Dionysius VI and expressed their personal joy in his becoming the Metropolitan of Malankara. That was indeed a moment of jubilation for everyone concerned, and in unison the assembly declared three times, according to custom, *oxios,* that he is worthy.

This situation however soon changed. Patriarch Mar Abdullah came on the scene. One of his definite intentions was, as already noted, to work out the plan of bringing the Church of Malabar under his complete rule. But the matter was not easy, for Mar Dionysius was not likely to submit to the position, and a great part of the Church, if not the whole of it, would join hands with him.

On 25 September 1909 Mar Abdullah arrived in Bombay,[16] accompanied by two Syrian monks. A party led by Mar Dionysius himself had gone there to receive the primate and take him to Kerala. A number of Keralite students residing in the city at that time joined them and together they accorded the patriarch a fitting welcome. From Bombay he was brought down to the South. Everywhere Syrian Christian people were keen to see that he was honoured. He saw kings and governors as well as men in high position in the state.

After these formalities, the patriarch turned his attention to the Church, and called a meeting of representatives from every parish to meet at the old seminary on 27 November 1909 and a few days that followed.[17] A large body of people came together, and a synod of bishops, clergy and people was held. Mar Abdullah himself took the chair and gave the presidential address. Then with the metropolitans, he retired to his room, after asking the assembly to indicate what they expected him to do for the Church. Seeing that no one made any proposal, the patriarch called three lay leaders by themselves. They were E. J. John, C. J. Kurien and M. A. Chacko, the first two of whom have already been noted above. M. A. Chacko was the Chief Superintendent of Police in the Cochin state, who played a memorable role in the history of the Malankara Syrian Church. After talking to them for a little while, the patriarch made the suggestion in a very diplomatic way that they should write a statement acknowledging the authority of the patriarch over everything in the Church. As this was unexpected, the three men discussed the matter among them for a short time. Though C. J. Kurien expressed himself in favour of the idea, the other two men vehemently opposed it. As they could not agree, the matter was taken to the assembly, where it was clearly rejected.[18] The patriarch had a defeat, but he was not going to take it.

Mar Abdullah had another rebuff. He knew that in order to establish his authority over the Church, he had to enlist support. From the experience of patriarch Peter III, he realized that he could get it more easily from candidates to the episcopal rank than from anybody else. Accordingly Mar Abdullah was keen to raise a large number of men to the rank of bishops, and he asked the people who assembled to signify the number of bishops they wanted him to consecrate for the Church, suggesting in a subtle way that the Malankara Syrian Church could easily afford to have upto fifty. But those who assembled did not opt for more than two.[19]

5. Clash with the Patriarch

The patriarch could however count on a party in the Church under the leadership of none other than the two co-trustees and metropolitan Paulose Mar Kurillos. The latter had received his consecration along with Mar Dionysius VI himself. Though he had not submitted the registered deed to the patriarch before he was raised to the episcopate, he gave it to him and made up with him in Kerala in September 1910. It should be remembered that Mar Kurillos and the two co-trustees were present in the meeting of the Malankara Association which in 1908 had elected Geevarghese ramban to be made bishop. They were present also in the meeting which accorded him a memorable welcome in 1909. In fact, one of the co-trustees, Mathen malpan of Konat, did in addition speak on the occasion. But due to a feeling, shared by them both, that the metropolitan trustee was managing Church matters by himself without sharing the responsibility with them,[20] the co-trustees developed a dislike for the metropolitan, and they sided with the patriarch against him.

With these men to fight for him, the patriarch's position was indeed strong. In fact, before he left India in September 1911, Mar Abdullah did a number of things to promote his interests. The conflict between those who supported the patriarch and those who stood by the metropolitan continued with greater intensity after he left.

a) When Mar Abdullah came to know that the people who came for the Kottayam synod of 1909 were not willing to make a statement acknowledging his authority beyond what has been established in court or to agree to his consecrating a large number of bishops, he adopted other tactics to gain his end. He denied that he ever asked for any authority, as all authority had been given to him by God himself and Apostle Peter.[21] In other words, patriarch Abdullah asserted that he had the authority, whether the Indian Church admitted it or not.

b) The nature of the authority claimed by the patriarch should be clarified as to its implications. That there was the distinction between spiritual authority and temporal authority, and that while the patriarchs claimed both in the Church of Malabar, the Royal Court decision admitted only the spiritual authority, has already been noted.[22] Mar Dionysius VI and those who stood with him were willing to admit

patriarch's spiritual authority over the Church, but were opposed to his claim of temporal authority. In fact, this was the only difference between the two sides. Spiritual authority here referred to matters related to the interpretation of the faith, maintenance of the sacramental life, and the observance of ecclesiastical discipline. This meant, in effect, that when the Church needed bishops, the patriarch should be requested to furnish them; or when it required *mooron* or holy oil, it should receive the same from the patriarch only. On questions of faith and liturgy, order and discipline, the Church of Malabar would not entertain a position, without the concurrence of the patriarch. Authority in temporal matters, on the other hand, consisted in the carrying on of the Church's internal administration, management of its finances, schools, parishes and other institutions. In fact, the claim of the patriarch that he had authority in both these spheres amounted to saying that he had the right to make demands on the incomes of the Church, appointment of bishops and other officials, and on its life in general.

Court decisions from the 19th century, as we have seen, had denied to the patriarch authority in the temporal sphere. We may recall here the fact that Joachim Mar Kurillos[23] had tried in vain to be declared the ruling prelate of the Church of Malabar, and that patriarch Peter III had endeavoured to establish his authority in the Church as a whole. Then came the judgement of the Royal Court of 1889, limiting the patriarch's authority to spiritual matters only. The history of the Church before 1875, as we have seen,[24] shows clearly that till then the patriarch had not been exercising even spiritual authority invariably.

Patriarch Abdullah, following Peter III, was claiming authority over the Indian Church in both spiritual and temporal spheres as a divine right, arguing that they constituted a unity. But neither patriarch had the patience to realize that this Indian Church had its own history, a history in which it had not been integrated with the Antiochene Syrian Church. In 1876 the synod of Mulanthuruthy asserted, without showing any evidence, that the two churches belonged together from ancient times.[25] This meant, in effect, that the Church of Malabar should forget its past and be merged with the past of the Antiochene Syrian Church. Should this be done? Could this be done by a community which had a sense of self-respect? These are questions of vital importance, but they were not faced by anyone.

Thus, so far as the Church of Malabar was concerned, Mulanthuruthy perpetrated the same error as the synod of Diamper had made in 1559. The latter could do what it did because the Portuguese political authority was there behind it. The former did the same thing on account of a division in the Church. However, there was one difference between the two incidents. Whereas 1599 did not imply direct papal involvement in the temporal affairs of the Indian Church, 1876 made out that this should be done with the patriarch as the beneficiary.

c) All the bishops consecrated by the patriarchs during the period following 1875, with one single exception, had admitted this illegitimate claim and given the patriarchs concerned the registered deeds as demanded by them. Thus in reality, all of them have betrayed the cause of preserving the integrity of the Indian Church. This exception was indeed Mar Dionysius VI. Before that time, Mar Dionysius V also refused to submit the registered deed, though Peter III required it of him. He could evade the issue, as he had been consecrated more than ten years earlier by Peter III's predecessor, without a mention of such requirement. Accordingly, when the matter was raised by Peter III, Mar Dionysius V could quietly waive the point, though it displeased the patriarch. The case of Mar Dionysius VI was different. To obtain the registered deed from him was very crucial for Mar Abdullah, so that his refusal to comply was a serious matter.[26] To add to this was the association's decision turning down the demand of the patriarch. In the face of this serious humiliation, patriarch Abdullah adopted the method of threats,[27] saying that if the metropolitan did not abide by his demand, he would see evil days and the Church of Malabar would not see peace and unity any longer.

d) Mar Abdullah found it easy, with the support he enjoyed of the powerful co-trustees, to persuade the weak-minded Paulose Mar Kurillos who was inclined to be jealous of his episcopal colleague in his rise, to submit to the patriarch the registered deed as required by him. However, in order to make things easy for Mar Kurillos, patriarch Abdullah saw to it that the two other newly consecrated metropolitans, Paulose Mar Athanasius and Geevarghese Mar Severios, presented to him the required documents before he did it.

e) The party that remained on his side submitted to Mar Abdullah the names of two candidates for elevation to the episcopal

rank. The patriarch asked them to present to him the registered deed, and they obeyed. They were Paulose Mar Athanasius of Alwaye and Geevarghese Mar Severios for the Canaanite community, who till then had no bishop of their own. In dealing with them and Mar Kurillos, Mar Abdullah moved in a sort of strategic way. The two of them were asked to submit the registered deeds prior to their consecration. Thus remban Paulose gave it in May 1910, remban Geevargheses on 27 August. Following them both, Paulose Mar Kurillos, who had been consecrated along with Mar Dionysius VI in Jerusalem, on 14 September, 1910.[28] By arranging the programme in this way, Mar Abdullah may well have hoped that their action would lead Mar Dionysius also to give up his resistance. But the metropolitan was unmoved.

f) Patriarch Abdullah visited churches in the hope of trying to persuade the managing committees in each of them to acknowledge his authority over them by submitting to him registered deeds stating that fact.[29] In this effort, however, Mar Abdullah had less success than patriarch Peter III had in 1876. In two or three churches where there was dispute between the party in power and the people, the former hoping to keep their hold on the church concerned and its properties, submitted the registered deed[30] to the patriarch, without the concurrence of the latter.

The community was now split into two. Mar Abdullah had on his side the co-trustees, three Indian bishops and the Syrian bishop Sleeba Mar Osthathios. Mar Dionysius had with him two bishops, Mar Ivanios Murimattam of Kandanad and Julius Mar Alvares, and a large body of the community's elite. The situation was indeed sad. The patriarch may not have realized the fact that he was presiding over the liquidation of a historic Church for, as we have seen, no reason that can be considered justifiable. So far as we can make out, Mar Dionysius VI had a heavy heart concerning what was happening. But he could not help it. The co-trustees could perhaps have done something. They did not however see that point. Thus, instead of trying to find a way to solve the problem facing the Church, they only entered the lists against the metropolitan.

The way in which the co-trustees tried to carry out the mission is very interesting, though it is most distressing. The old seminary turned out to be the battle-ground. It was in the possession of Mar

Dionysius, and Father Alexander Mattackel was serving as its manager. As the centre of the Church, the seminary was the place where Mar Dionysius and the manager lived. Besides, Paulose Mar Kurillos also had his residence in the same place. The patriarch and his monk companions stayed there as guests of the Church. The co-trustees now hatched a plot to drive out Mar Dionysius and the manager-priest, thereby to take control of the property and its assets. Claiming to exercise authority over the seminary property as co-trustees of the Church, they served the priest with a notice, asking him to leave the place, because his service as manager of the seminary was unsatisfactory. Along with the notice, they filed a criminal suit,[31] praying that the priest must be expelled if necessary by governmental intervention. They may well have hoped that if the priest was sent away, the metropolitan could be ousted as the next step. The attempt was not successful; it resulted only in the taking over of the seminary into police custody, leaving the men in residence to continue in their respective rooms.

Faced with this situation, patriarch Abdullah, advised very definitely by his supporters,[32] proceeded to strike the decisive blow. That was to serve the metropolitan with a letter of excommunication. The letter was despatched on 8th June 1911 as a registered article sent from Alleppey. The patriarch was residing then in the same building as the metropolitan himself, and the place of the letter's origin was indicated as Kottayam. The devious course adopted in posting the letter from Alleppey instead of Kottayam shows that the patriarch had fears that something untoward might happen if it had been sent from the latter place. In any case, the letter of the patriarch, instead of alienating people from Mar Dionysius brought them closer to him in many parts of the Church. In fact, in a large number of churches, including the old seminary, the letter was not given a reading.

6. **The Divided Community**

A few days after receiving the letter of excommunication, on 27 June 1911, Mar Dionysius convened the managing committee of the Church at the M. D. Seminary chapel.[33] The meeting was attended, besides Mar Dionysius himself, by Julius Mar Alvares[34] and a large number of clergy and people from all over the Church. This meeting expressed its solidarity with the metropolitan, ignoring his excommunication, and resolved to call the Malankara Association to work out

the steps to be adopted in meeting the situation.[35] The Association met on 7 September 1911 at the M. D. Seminary, Kottayam. Attended by a large body of representatives, this assembly resolved to stand by the metropolitan against the action of the patriarch. It further removed Mathen malpan and C. J. Kurien from their trusteeship and appointed two others to take their respective places.

Meanwhile, in response to communication from Kerala, the senior patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah informed by cable on 17 August 1911 that the excommunication of Mar Dionysius by Abdullah was null and void, and that the Church of Malabar should only ignore it.[36] In pursuance of the cable, the patriarch sent a letter as well. Though this assurance by the canonical patriarch was encouraging to the party of Mar Dionysius, it was not enough to change the minds of his opponents. They had a meeting of representatives from parish churches at Alwaye on 31 August of the same year. Convened by patriarch Abdullah and attended by the patriarch himself, his delegate Sleeba Mar Osthathios, and the three Indian bishops—Paulose Mar Kurillos, Paulose Mar Athanasius and Geevarghese Mar Severios—and delegates from churches on the side of the patriarch, this gathering acknowledged the authority of the patriarch in everything connected with the Church, as demanded by him. It then requested the patriarch to appoint Paulose Mar Kurillos as President of the Association, not as the Metropolitan of Malankara,[37] accepted Sleeba Mar Osthathios as the patriarch's delegate in India, and decided to fight the issue against Mar Dionysius. Mar Abdullah was gratified that there was a party in the Church of Malabar to follow him in implicit obedience, though the fact that the one Malankara Syrian Church was now divided did not grieve him at all.

About six weeks after the Alwaye meeting, Mar Abdullah returned to his country on 14 October 1911. Whereas on his way to Kerala more than two years earlier he had been given impressive receptions from Bombay wherever he went, there was not much of it on his journey back. Four years later on 25 November 1915 he bade farewell to this world at Jerusalem and was buried there, but the disaster in the Church of Malabar, which he brought about for no commendable reason, continued to play havoc in this ancient Christian community. The bishops on his side in Kerala had the hope that, with the help of the two trustees, they would be in a position to defeat the party

of Mar Dionysius easily. The party that stood with Mar Dionysius had a serious handicap, in that the average people attached undue religious stigma to persons subjected to excommunications. It was not the question of truth that weighed with them, but the belief that with excommunications go divine displeasure. The patriarchs themselves referred *ad infinitum* to the latter point against those whom they were persuaded to take disciplinary action, by committing the victims to perdition, not to life. Thus the community on the side of Mar Dionysius needed help, spiritual help, very badly.

A little less than eight months after Mar Abdullah left India, Mar Abdul Messiah, the primate before him who was indeed the canonical patriarch, arrived in Kerala. In 1908, when Geevarghese remban and Paulose remban were sent for their consecration to Mar Abdullah, the senior patriarch was alive and well. But he was not free in Turkey to officiate as the head of the Church.[38] The Church of Malabar was not interested at that time to go into the question of merit between the two men, but only to obtain its candidates duly consecrated without hindrance in a foreign land. However, when the excommunication of Mar Dionysius was announced by Mar Abdullah, it shocked most of the community's fair minded members. They supported the metropolitan and with him sought ways and means of meeting the crisis. In this situation the senior patriarch was contacted and he expressed himself willing to come to India and repair the damage.

Mar Abdul Messiah kept his word. On 13 June 1912 he arrived in Kerala, accompanied by two Syrian monks. Then on 10 September of the same year he, in cooperation with Mar Dionysius[39] and Mar Ivanios Murimattam, raised Punnose remban to the episcopal rank as metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Gregorios, who was installed as the third catholicos in 1929. A week later, on 17 September, the patriarch cooperated with Mar Dionysius and Mar Gregorios in the installation of Mar Ivanios as catholicos, at Niranam. Later, on 10 February 1913, Mar Abdul Messiah did further lead the ceremony for the consecration of two other bishops, Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos, who was made the second catholicos in 1925, and Joachim Mar Ivanios. After all these accomplishments, Mar Abdul Messiah left India on 3 March 1913. On 30 August 1915 he passed away, and his bodily remains were interred at the headquarters of the Antiochene Syrian

Church at Mardin, in the same place where his predecessors on the patriarchal see had been laid to rest. This is an honour which was denied to Mar Abdullah by providence, as the latter was buried at Jerusalem. The incident is a clear evidence that Mar Abdul Messiah was considered the rightful patriarch officially by the Antiochene Syrian Church till his death.

Following the consecrations, patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah issued two directives, or *kalpanas,* dated 17 September 1912 and 24 February 1913 respectively. The first of them states that the catholicos has been installed, and the second that the bishops of the Malankara Syrian Church have the right to raise a successor to the catholicos after he passes away. The first contained the following words:

> In response to your request, we have ordained our beloved Ivanios as Baselios with the name Maphrian or Catholicos of the East, that is the See of the Apostle Mar Thoma in India and elsewhere.

The catholicos, the *kalpana* goes on, is given the authority to fulfil, in consultation with the Malankara Association, all the services needed for the edification of the Church, by the Holy Spirit. He shall thus ordain metropolitans and bishops, consecrate the holy *Mooron,* and perform all other functions necessary for the Church.

This *kalpana,* however, does not specify the authority of the Church of Malabar to take action about the continuation of the office. This is noted in the second letter. The relevant part of it reads:[40]

> When the catholicos passes away, your bishops have the legitimate right to ordain another person in his place.

The importance of these *kalpanas* should be noted as follows:

a) The spiritual authority which the Royal Court judgment had admitted for the patriarch of Antioch was from then on to be administered by the catholicos in the Malankara Church.

b) The transfer of authority involved here was acknowledged by a patriarch, so that its validity is assured in reality.

c) This authority is guaranteed for the Malankara Church in the office of the catholicate.

His Holiness Baselios Paulose I
Catholicos of the East
(1912—1913)

d) The Church of Malabar should keep to a permanent friendly relation with the see of Antioch, preserving the bond of love with that see.

While these developments were taking place on the side of Mar Dionysius, the other party was not keeping quiet. The seminary which the police had taken in its custody[41] became a centre of incessant battle. The criminal suit filed by the co-trustees was heard in the lower court, where it was dismissed. The judgment stated that though in theory the seminary constituted a trust which was to be held jointly by all the three trustees, in fact it was in the possession of the metropolitan, so that he was the person to administer the property. On the strength of this court ruling, the entire seminary property was given over to Mar Dionysius.

The co-trustees now made their appeal in high court, which modified the verdict and gave the ruling that the seminary property was *defacto* in the possession of all the trustees equally as a trust. The co-trustees now felt that they should establish the fact of their possession. To carry this out, C. J. Kurien, who could command the services of local man power, tried to force his way into the seminary, and even drive out the metropolitan and his companions from there. The attempt continued for sometime, which led to a number of shocking incidents, including the murder in cold blood of Mar Dionysius' body-guard, a calculated effort to do away with the metropolitan himself, and various other things.[42] But though the happenings were painful to the utmost, none of the efforts enabled the co-trustees to gain their end. On the contrary, the metropolitan and the men in his company lived in the seminary, though in the midst of agonizing experiences.

7. The Litigation in its First Stage

Before leaving India, Mar Abdullah wrote to the British resident in Trivandrum that Paulose Mar Kurillos and the co-trustees, Mathen malpan and C. J. Kurien, should be permitted to draw the interest on the deposit money. Kurien had influence with those in authority in these matters, which he used to the advantage of his party. The resident responded favourably and the trio succeeded in obtaining the interest uptodate.[43] When this information reached Mar Dionysius, he approached the resident and the governor of Madras,

pointing out the procedural error committed in the payment already made. The resident now ordered the reimbursement of the money by those who had received it. The State Secretary of India followed up the matter by filing a suit in the district court of Trivandrum in July 1913, asking for a decision as to who had the legitimate right to receive the interest.[44] Started in this way as an inter-pleader suit, the Malankara Syrian Church case—the *Vattipana case,* as it is usually known—continued for a long period of time.

Even before the Trivandrum district court started examining the case, a law suit was filed in Cochin, in a court at Kunnamkulam,[45] in which the validity of the excommunication of Mar Dionysius was a question at issue. The court judged it to be null and void. A similar decree was given by the high court at Trichur. Though these judgments were not binding on the law courts of Travancore, they gave Mar Dionysius an amount of moral courage, which he needed at that time.

The district court of Trivandrum admitted the case, with the India Secretary as petitioner and those of both parties as defendants. Thus Mar Dionysius and his co-trustees were listed as defendants one to three, and Mar Kurillos and his co-trustees as defendants four to six. However, after a time, the first three defendants were treated as petitioners and the others alone as defendants. Besides the six men, it was possible for others on both sides to join as parties in the case. While the case was in progress, in November 1917, Mar Kurillos died. Now the three surviving bishops on the patriarchal side convened a meeting of church representatives at Alwaye on 31 January 1918, and elected Paulose Mar Athanasius to replace Mar Kurillos. Thereafter he was a defendant as 42nd in the list. Realizing the complexity of the case, with a view to obtaining a decision as early as possible, justice G. Sankara Pillai had been appointed as a special judge to examine it and give his decree. The examination of the case continued for about six years. On 15 September 1919 justice Sankara Pillai gave his judgment. It vindicated Mar Dionysius and defended the stand which he adopted.[46]

More than a week before the judgment was announced, Mar Dionysius tried for a reconciliation to be worked out between the two parties. He invited C. J. Kurien for a discussion of the issue, but this did not bear fruit. Then, grieved at the debacle of his party in court, Kurien proceeded to take the matter to the high court.[47] A full

bench of the court, consisting of three judges headed by chief justice R. Veera Raghava Iyenkar, gave its verdict on 10 March 1923,[48] reversing the position adopted by the lower court. However, the verdict was such that it could not be acted upon by the victorious side, and for the other side it was most degrading.

The judgment declared the excommunication of Mar Dionysius to be valid. It admitted that the patriarch had the right to exercise authority in both spiritual and temporal matters related to the Church, and that the metropolitan was guilty of disobeying his spiritual superior. The judgment ignored all previously held legal positions regarding patriarchal supremacy over the Indian Church and was thus a hard blow to Mar Dionysius. Thoroughly unexpected as it was, neither he nor the other leaders on his side had made any plan beforehand to meet the situation. However, though E. J. John,[49] the lay stalwart who fought the issue for Mar Dionysius so far, was more or less willing to abandon him and make peace in the Church, *Malayala Manorama* and its editor K. C. Mammen Mappillai came out boldly and challenged the justice of the judgment. In a series of articles this paper defended the stand of the metropolitan and helped to keep up the morale of the people on his side.[50]

The verdict, however, did not give room for the defendants to reap its benefits.[51] Mar Dionysius and his companions now left the seminary, which came again into police custody. The problem regarding the judgment was that it did not approve the appointment of Paulose Mar Athanasius in place of Paulose Mar Kurillos. Thus the place of the metropolitan trustee of the patriarchal side, the crucial person in the deal, was left vacant and no action could be taken by the winning side, before he was approved legally. The co-trustees were not in a position by themselves to derive the advantage due to their party, and the judgment remained in paper only.

8. The Mardin Trip

Now Mar Dionysius, without consulting any one, decided upon a line of action independently. After talking the matter to a few persons, he took with him two of his priests and two lay helpers and started on his trip to Mardin in Turkey, to the then patriarch Mar Elias III. Two things are clearly seen in the decision of Mar Dionysius. One, the metropolitan had not lost faith in the fair dealings and good

behaviour of the Antiochene Syrians. He may have thought that Mar Abdullah was not the typical Syrian Christian of the Antiochene brand, and that with a new person occupying the historic see he had a better chance of trying to settle the matter peacefully. Two, his love for the Church and concern for its unity was so real that he was willing to take any risks on his life towards realizing it.

Leaving India on 26 June 1923,[52] from Bombay to Bosrah, the party travelled by ship, and from there to Mardin by train. After covering a tedious journey of thirty-seven days in the intense summer heat of those areas, they met the patriarch who received them cordially. During their stay of sixty-seven days with the patriarch, the metropolitan had many chances of talking with him on the issue concerning the Church of Malabar.

We have no contemporary eye-witness non-partisan account of the meetings between them or their conversations. But from statements made by Mar Dionysius as he deposed in court, as also from letters he wrote on the subject and references to it in his speeches, we can gather the following information.

1. Patriarch Mar Elias III defended the action of his predecessors in demanding registered deeds from episcopal candidates and parish churches, acknowledging the patriarch's authority in both temporal and spiritual matters concerning the Church.

2. But on the 42nd day of their stay at Mardin Mar Elias III seemed to yield on this point. On that day he told the metropolitan, 'We need only the undertaking before God, not any document which a court of law may require. Your interdict and all other excommunications are lifted. We accept the ecclesiastical dignitaries raised by patriarch Abdul Messiah as well as the priests they raised, and we bless them all'.[53]

3. Mar Elias was not however willing to sanction the continuance of the catholicate in Malabar. In other words, his intention was only to forget the past and look to the future, when he would be able to bring the Church as a whole under his jurisdiction.

4. As his own messenger to communicate his point of view implied in his action, the patriarch wanted to send a Syrian bishop to India. The person chosen for the purpose was a monk named Elias

whom the patriarch consecrated as metropolitan Mar Julius. Mar Elias entrusted him with a letter incorporating matters which he had agreed with Mar Dionysius and sent him to India in the company of Mar Dionysius and party, who in fact met the transporation cost of the new bishop till they reached Kerala.

5. Mar Julius was very friendly with his companions until the party's arrival in Kerala[54] and showed the spirit of oneness in his dealings with them. But at Shoranur he was met by some agents of the other side who brought about a change in him, which he maintained ever since and went over to the opposite camp.

6. After this incident the letter of the a patriarch which Mar Julius had brought with him never saw the light of day.

Stories were then propagated on the subject by interested parties, which had hardly any basis in truth. In fact, the question of the patriarch's letter despatched through Mar Julius became a cause of some serious controversy in the Church at that time. The people on the side of Mar Dionysius blamed Mar Julius and the patriarch's side arguing that he hid the letter, if not destroyed it, at their instigation, and that therefore the peace in the Church which the patriarch was keen to bring about remained an unfulfilled dream.

In the face of this argument, Mar Julius and those on his side made their self-defence. They tried to make out that Mar Dionysius had told the patriarch of his wish to withdraw from all administrative responsibilities and live in peace in a monastic community. The patriarch responded by saying that in fact if he wanted to retire, the patriarch on his part would lift the excommunication and let him enjoy the peace of mind which he sought. It was in order to see whether Mar Dionysius did as he told the patriarch, and if he stood by his word, to announce the lifting of the excommunication that Mar Julius was delegated to India. Since the metropolitan did not abide by his own expressed plan, Mar Julius kept quiet and did not announce the cancelling of the interdict. Therefore peace in the Church was not effected because of Mar Dionysius' own fault, not of anybody else.

Mar Dionysius is clear that the lifting of the excommunication was unconditional,[55] and that he had never expressed a desire to withdraw from his position. What he did say, on the other hand, was that if peace was established and the united Church appointed through the

Malankara Association some other person to take his place, he would gladly relinquish his post. In other words, the concern of Mar Dionysius was for the wellbeing of the Church, not for his personal standing in it.

Without implying any special pleading, one can say very definitely that the self-defence of the patriarch's party is a story made up in Kerala. That party's leadership, as we have seen, had from the beginning been struggling to get Mar Dionysius out of the way in order that they might take control of the Church properties. It is this point of view of theirs that is reflected in the argument concerning the patriarch's letter, which they have sponsored. They may well have thought that Mar Dionysius had gone to Mardin in a weak frame of mind, faced as he was with a thoroughly adverse high court verdict, and that he would have agreed to any condition in order to obtain the favour of the patriarch. But the fact about Mar Dionysius, which his opponents did not apparently realize, is that he was not a man who would compromise on principle. Therefore, the argument of the patriarch's side here should be dismissed as a pure fabrication.

There is however one point in the argument of the supporters of Mar Dionysius which sounds superficial. They seem to exonerate the patriarch in regard to the failure of the peace efforts. This certainly is not the truth of the matter. It is clear from the words of Mar Dionysius himself and from what happened subsequently that patriarch Elias III was neither willing to acknowledge the catholicate for the Church of Malabar[56] nor withdraw his claim of authority over the temporalities of the Church. In fact, he refused to admit the continuance of the catholicate because of his insistence that he had authority even in temporal matters connected with the Church. Therefore, the lifting of the excommunication, even if it was unconditional, had reference only to the past, affecting the standing of Mar Dionysius alone in the Church. That would not have solved the problem which the Church of Malabar was facing, in any real way.

It is obvious therefore that by his Mardin trip Mar Dionysius achieved nothing substantial for the Church. He may have understood how much one could expect of the Antiochene Syrian patriarchs to appreciate the needs of the Indian Church and help it realistically. In any case, he and his companions came back to India in October 1923.

After their arrival, a lot of comments, sympathetic and unsympathetic, were exchanged for some time between members of the two sides.

9. Litigation in the Second Stage

In making the Mardin trip Mar Dionysius was obviously taking a risk out of a desire for peace in the Church. It should be observed that regarding peace, the metropolitan and almost any one in the Malankara Church had a definite notion. They had attached serious authority to the decisions of the synod of Mulanthuruthy. Mar Dionysius, on his part, was led by a feeling of sincere affinity with the Antiochene Syrian Church, and he did in reality respect the patriarch.[57] The synod of Mulanthuruthy, as we have seen, had declared, in opposition to the reform party, the Malankara Syrian Church a part of the Antiochene Syrian Church. It is in that tradition that Mar Dionysius and the Malankara Church continued to function. The metropolitan was keen only that, keeping to the Antiochene connection, the internal freedom of the Church should be preserved. He was sure that his point of view was right, and may well have thought that a new patriarch would definitely endorse it. But that is not what happened.

In the face of the helplessness experienced by Mar Dionysius and the Church under his spiritual care at this time, it should be observed that the real need of the Church of Malabar was a historically defensible evaluation of the Antiochene connection itself. However, the background of the metropolitan and his supporters did not allow them to see this need. In any case, the Mardin trip of Mar Dionysius and the various efforts for peace in the Church based on the rationale of that trip ended in fiasco. But the failure did not trouble the metropolitan too much. He felt only that he did his duty in the light of his understanding of things, and left the matter there.

Meanwhile, in the month of June 1925,[58] namely about two years and three and a half months after the full bench of the high court headed by justice Veera Raghava Iyenkar had given its judgment, a petition requesting for a review of the verdict came to be filed in the same court. By then, however, justice Veera Raghava Iyenkar and C. J. Kurien had gone out of the scene, the judge by retirement and Kurien by death. The way, despite time bar, the petition was brought before the court soon after the disappearance from active service of the architect of that verdict of ill-repute, is a story in itself. On the day

following the announcement of the judgment on 23 March 1923 an application was duly filed in court, asking for a copy of the judgment in order to enable the aggrieved party to appeal for a review. But somehow the application came to be missing from the files, so that, when the judgment was ready for transmission within a few months, a copy was not possible to be handed over to the concerned party. The petition now came to the court as a registered article by post, and it had to be admitted.[59]

The review petition was filed with the new full bench of the high court headed by justice Chatfield,[60] a former colleague of Veera Raghava Iyenkar. This college of judges admitted the petition, ruling that the argument of time bar was not applicable.[61] Then, on hearing both sides, they gave their unanimous verdict that the excommunication of Mar Dionysius by patriarch Abdullah could not be defended, for in pronouncing it the patriarch violated the fundamental principle of natural justice,[62] that the book of the canon laws on which the previous judgment had relied was a spurious creation of interested parties, and that Mar Dionysius and his co-trustees were fully entitled to represent the Church of Malabar. This was a memorable victory for the standpoint adopted by the metropolitan.

It is interesting to note here that the difference in principle between Mar Dionysius and his opponents consisted of one issue only. Whereas the former was convinced that the Church of Malabar should have its administrative freedom guaranteed, the latter was not keen to press it. The opponents of Mar Dionysius, to be sure, were not more loyal to the Antiochene Syrian patriarch or to the West Syrian ecclesiastical traditions than he himself was. They wanted only, as we have already observed, to pay undue veneration towards the patriarch as a means to degrade the metropolitan and take control of the Church and its assets. The verdict of Veera Raghava Iyenkar gave them in principle all that they cared for, and they had begun to work on it to realize its full benefits. It was in this situation that the castle which they built in the air crumbled, never to be restored, by means of the unanimous judgment of the high court on the review petition.

This judgment issued on 2 July 1928 afforded Mar Dionysius and his party heart-felt joy. A little over a month later the metropolitan had another significant victory. Following the Iyenkar verdict, the patriarch's side put forth their claim to the seminary.[63] They filed a

criminal suit with the district magistrate of Kottayam, and the property was taken into police custody. Mar Dionysius and those with him had to leave the place, but the case continued. The final verdict was given on 6 August 1928, which stated that the seminary and other properties of the Church were *de facto* in the possession of the metropolitan trustee. In this way, Mar Dionysius' right to be the Malankara Metropolitan and hold the seminary and other assets of the Church in his possession was finally established in court.[64]

C. J. Kurien had died on 24 February 1923,[65] even before the Iyenkar verdict was announced, and Mathen malpan[66] on 8 September 1927. Neither of them had the fortune or misfortune to witness the turn of events that came to pass in 1928. Both of them were indeed illustrious sons of the Church who, for some reason unknown to us, became estranged from Mar Dionysius VI. This in itself is sad, but sadder is the fact that in their effort to keep down their adversary, they sided with the Antiochene Syrian patriarch, ignoring the genuine rights of the historic Church of St. Thomas the Apostle.

10. The Suspension Case

The disappearance of C. J. Kurien and Mathen malpan from the earthly scene did not lead the party which they had built up to see the enormity of the disaster that had come upon the Church. The two men were duly replaced by other men, who found the two court decisions so disappointing that they were eager to do something to avert the metropolitan from enjoying all the benefits of his victories.[67] In a desperate mood, as it were, they felt that he should be withheld at least from drawing the interest on the deposit money, which by then had grown into a fairly substantial amount. They now embarked upon a fresh litigation on 21 August 1928. Eighteen persons from around Kottayam were the petitioners in the new suit.[68]

These men may have received inspiration from a law suit filed in court by C. J. Kurien several years earlier. Mar Dionysius had invested some money from the income of the Parumala seminary in a chit fund on behalf of the seminary.[69] When it matured, Kurien put forward the claim in court that the amount in question was part of the public fund, and that as such it should go to the community through the co-trustees, but not through Mar Dionysius as he stood excommunicated from the Church. Though Mar Dionysius won the case and

received the money for the seminary, the incident offered a precedent to posterity that an opponent could be vexed by litigation almost on any issue.

The story of the new law suit is most interesting. It does, to be sure, show the spiritual decline that prevailed in the Church. On 17 August 1928, namely four days before the case was filed in court, metropolitan Elias Mar Julius, who had come to India in 1923[70] and who since then was appointed by the patriarch as his delegate, addressed a letter to Mar Dionysius.[71] Claiming to be 'the spiritual head of the Jacobite Syrians of Malabar', the author made out that he suspended the addressee from the rank of the Malankara Metropolitan. This rank, the letter said, though the civil court had justified it to him, was not recognized by the Church. By means of the letter, therefore, the author demanded of the addressee to do one of two things: either he should disown the position and retire from service, or he should present himself before the author and be examined on the misdeeds of which he had been accused. The matter was felt to be very urgent, as Mar Dionysius was about to draw the interest. He was given two days for giving a response.

Without waiting for an answer,[72] a case was filed in the district court of Kottayam by the eighteen men, on the strength of the 'suspension order'. As defendants they named sixteen men, the first among them being Mar Dionysius himself. The petitioners argued in their suit that Mar Dionysius was once a metropolitan in the Church, but that since then he had been deposed by the patriarch who, in the first place, had raised him to the episcopal rank. For this reason, they argued that he could not be accepted by the Church as a lawful metropolitan. Accordingly, they prayed the court that Mar Dionysius and the fifteen men with him should be debarred from membership in the Church and disallowed to keep in their possession any property that belonged to the Church.

The thinking that lay behind the suspension case deserves attention. The verdict of the high court in the review petition, as we have seen, was that the excommunication of Mar Dionysius, on which these petitioners base their argument, had no force, because it had violated the principle of natural justice. The suspension case, though it does not apparently take cognizance of the high court decree, admits the flaw in the procedure adopted by patriarch Abdullah, namely that

before taking action against the metropolitan, the former had not formally tried him. To get over this defect was a matter of concern for the opponents of Mar Dionysius. Accordingly they felt that the metropolitan should be made to give up the position himself, or he should be formally examined and found guilty by an ecclesiastical authority. Since the patriarch was not present in India, his delegate was deemed competent to take his place.

The sorry fact about the case is not so much that it was filed and that, as we shall see, the petitioners were not able to follow it up in court, as that it was based on a callous negligence of the Church's integrity. Patriarch Abdullah, as we have seen, was keen to work out two measures in the Church. On the one hand, he wanted to rule the Church of Malabar directly through a delegate practically ignoring the Indian bishops altogether, and on the other to assert his authority in the Church in all things, both spiritual and temporal. The letter of Mar Julius claimed them both for the patriarch, and the law suit which strengthened itself on its basis granted all that the patriarch had been demanding. Thus we may say that the personal animosity which Mathen malpan and C. J. Kurien harboured against Mar Dionysius was carried a step forward by those who entered their shoes after them.

The case continued till 23 January 1930, namely for two years and five months. Mar Julius was one of the witnesses for the petitioners. He prayed the court that he be examined at a place specified by him through a commissioner, instead of his going to the court. That petition was granted, and the party concerned was required to pay a fee. The examination continued for some time. Then 23 January 1930 was fixed for contnuing the examination. But on this occasion the fee was not remitted, and the case was dismissed. Though the petitioners raised the case to the high court for a re-examination of the dismissal, that also had the same fate as the original suit in the lower court.

With this turn of events, Mar Dionysius VI attained to the zenith of his glory as the victor in all court cases. With his co-trustees, he was now declared eligible to receive the interest on the deposit money and hold in possession all Church properties.

Following the legal triumph of Mar Dionysius, there was another development in the Church. A number of parish churches in the

strongholds of the patriarch's side requested the metropolitan to visit them.[73] He accepted their invitation and during the year 1929 he spent several months with them. However, one of the churches in the diocese of Kandanad, under the instruction of its diocesan metropolitan, raised objection and a law suit was filed in court.[74] Though the court decided the case in Mar Dionysius' favour in March 1930, the metropolitan did not undertake any further trip to those parts.

11. Visit of Patriarch Mar Elias III

The fourth Antiochene Syrian patriarch to visit Malabar was Mar Elias III. Accompanied by a Syrian bishop, metropolitan Mar Climis, two monks and two laymen, the patriarch arrived at Alwaye on 20 March 1931. He was the same patriarch whom Mar Dionysius had met at Mardin in 1923, and who died and was laid to rest at Manjinikara in 1932.

Patriarch Elias III has been made out by the patriarch's side as an angel of peace, who had come to Malabar with the deliberats intention of working out a union of the two parties in the Church. It is necessary therefore to examine why and how he came, and what he did for the progress of the Church.

In 1930, as we have seen, Mar Dionysius VI whom the patriarch had hoped either to bring to his knees or to kick out of the Church, turned out to be invincible. He had won all the law suits in which he was involved, and he was legally recognized as the Metropolitan of Malankara. He had organized matters connected with the Church in such a way that the people who followed him were assured of their spiritual and ecclesiastical needs satisfactorily met. This, as we shall see more of it later, is where the importance of the catholicate, which he established and which he defended all the way, did in fact lie.

The patriarch's side, on the other hand, was passing through a period of crisis. Though there were four Indian metropolitans and the Syrian metropolitan Mar Julius as the delegate of the patriarch offering it leadership, the fact is that there was not much love and unity in spirit left among them. The delegate was at heart disliked by all the Indian bishops,[75] and thereby they showed forth in action a clear rejection of the plan of patriarch Mar Abdullah in raising the dignitary.

There was however one point around which the party could be rallied. That was their common repudiation of Mar Dionysius and the catholicate. Its leaders did apparently believe that if somehow the metropolitan and the catholicate were discredited, the party's problems would all be solved. In order to achieve the goal, they continued the tactics of indulging in unlimited polemics. In keeping with that spirit, they saw to it that the clergy of the catholicate were never allowed to cooperate with their clergy in divine services. Since their effort to keep down Mar Dionysius had lost its force, they were willing to spare him in a sort of an uneasy way. Yet they marked out the catholicate as their target of constant vituperation. That the catholicos and the clergy on his side were fake, was a usual slogan they enjoyed in reciting *ad infinitum*. By all these activities they were seeking, whether knowingly or unknowingly, to create and propagate a culture of human hatred.

In the face of this painful state of affairs, people on both sides got together on several occasions to discuss how peace and harmony could be restored in the Church. However, all such efforts failed on the one issue concerning how the catholicate could be absorbed. The patriarch, as we have seen, was invariably opposed to recognizing a catholicate in the Indian Church, which the history and the canon laws of the Antiochene Syrian Church approved. He did, in fact, guess rightly that to recognize the historic catholicate for India would bring to an end the possibility of his interference in the Indian Church. The party on his side, possibly in their concern to save their face, would not move an inch beyond what the patriarch was pleased to admit.

Patriarch Elias III was aware of the facts about the Indian Church through his delegate and was keen to do what he could to strengthen his party, if necessary even by an Indian visit. This situation coincided with another development. The then Viceroy of India,[76] Lord Irwin, came to know about the sad state of division in this ancient Church. He evinced an interest in helping it regain its unity. Mar Dionysius and the catholicos expressed their willingness to leave the issue for him to handle through competent persons nominated by the viceroy himself. With this assurance from one of the two parties in the dispute, Lord Irwin contacted the patriarch who constituted the other through the British Ambassador in Iraq, and obtained his consent as well.

The plan of the viceroy was to nominate an arbitration committee with Dr. Foss Westcott, Metropolitan of the Anglican Church in India, and bishop Dr. Charles Gore from England who at that time was on a visit of India, among its members, in order that it might give its recommendation for a settlement of the dispute. The patriarch responded to the viceroy's invitation and came to India. After talking with him, the Syrian leader expressed himself against the idea of an arbitration committee, on the ground that, as the head of the Church, he should be able to solve its problems. Yet, the viceroy suggested that the patriarch should meet with the two Anglican Church leaders in Madras before proceeding to Kerala. This he agreed to do. On 18 and 19 March 1931 patriarch Elias had meetings with the Anglican bishops. No record of their conversation has come down to us. In any case, the discussions produced nothing tangible, and the patriarch and party reached Alwaye the next day.

The fact that patriarch Elias III did not agree to the appointment of an arbitration committee deserves special attention. Why did he reject the proposal, if he really was exercised over the question of finding a way to bring about unity in the Church? In the light of what we know about the attitude of patriarchs Peter III, Abdullah II and Elias III so far, the answer is clear. He may well have guessed that a committee of fair-minded arbitrators was not likely to endorse his plan of keeping the Church of Malabar under patriarchal tutelage for ever. So, he did not want to take a risk, and he quietly gave up the idea. In any case, the initiative which Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India, took in the hope of restoring unity and harmony in the Indian Church of St. Thomas failed.

It is not necessary to go into the whole story of patriarch Elias' Indian visit here. Insofar as it concerned Mar Dionysius and the catholicate, there are three things to be noted.

a) *The patriarch did openly and unequivocally withdraw the interdict of Mar Dionysius.* Soon after the arrival of Mar Elias at Alwaye, the metropolitan made on him a courtesy call, in recognition of the hospitality which he had received at Mardin. The patriarch received him cordially. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Mar Elias announced publicly that he withdrew the excommunication of Mar Dionysius.[77] That indeed was an impressive moment. All peace-loving people in the Church rejoiced at the good gesture implied in the

action, and the patriarch succeeded thereby to endear himself to many both in the Church and outside.

The fact however is that what Mar Elias did on the occasion is not anything particularly mentionable, as many tried to make out of it. At Mardin, more than seven years ago, he had already expressed himself clearly in this way, whether conditionally as the patriarch's party argued or unconditionally as ar Dionysius had stated. The question to be raised here is, What did the patriarch do, in fact, in claiming to lift the excommunication? The answer is clear and simple. In 1911 his predecessor had flouted all norms of justice and fair-play and despatched to the Malankara Metropolitan a letter of ill-fame, making out in an ingenious way a number of flimsy charges against him, without feeling the moral obligation to establish any one of them in a straightforward manner. Though the action was defended by interested parties in the Church, it came under severe censure of the then highest court of law of the country. Mar Elias had now the good sense to subtly disown the most high-handed action of his predecessor. Thus he may be said to have endeavoured to restore the honour of the Antiochene Syrian patriarchate which the patriarch before him had callously brought low. Therefore, the withdrawal of Mar Dionysius' excommunication by patriarch Elias III did not mean anything in substance for the good of the Church of Malabar.

b) *The patriarch was still unwilling to face the question of the catholicate.* The lifting of Mar Dionysius' excommunication implied only correcting a mistake, which was of great need. But the Church of Malabar had the responsibility of building up its future. If the patriarch had a genuine concern for the welfare of this Indian Church, he should have faced the question of the catholicate that was already functioning in the Church and directed it from the point of view of better service. Here lay the crux of the problem. The patriarch was refusing all the way to admit the fact that the dignitary was there in the Church, whether the whole community accepted it or not. In other words, he was unwilling either to reconcile himself with the existing situation, or to institute the office *de novo*. If, for instance, the question that weighed with him was that the catholicate of the time was defective, he could have convened a meeting of representatives from both sides and, in cooperation with them, sought to rectify it. His attitude on this vital issue was thoroughly negative.

The fact therefore is that Mar Elias III was not prepared to go even a single step forward, beyond Mar Peter III and Mar Abdullah II, in meeting the genuine needs of the Malankara Church, in which he claimed to have come to bring unity and concord. He wanted only to try, if he could, to unite the parties in the Church under his supreme authority and bring the whole of it within his absolute control. Here he failed.

c) *The patriarch was keen to strengthen the party loyal to him.* This fact should be specially noted. Seeing that Mar Dionysius and the community with him would not fall in line with his plan of abolishing the catholicate, Mar Elias concentrated on activities that would serve the interests of the party on his side. For this purpose, he proceeded with the intention of excommunicating Mar Dionysius in a way that would not be dismissed on legal grounds. Since the action of Mar Abdullah, as we have seen, was reproved by the high court on the ground that it had been taken without any formal trial of the man, Mar Elias now decided to proceed against him afresh in a more defensible way. The question whether that was the right step for a patriarch to adopt in dealing with a grave situation in the Church, or whether that would advance his declared mission, did not unfortunately attract the attention of the holy man. It should be recalled that the patriarch had on his side at that time six metropolitans, four Indians and two, from Syria, so that if everything went as planned, he could carry out his objective rather easily.

On 29 June 1931 Mar Dionysius received a note from Mar Elias III, asking him to see the latter at the church of Kuruppanpady on 30 June, namely the next day.[78] Apparently, without suspecting anything untoward, Mar Dionysius went to the specified place on the appointed day. When he entered the room where the patriarch was residing, he found there, besides the patriarch himself four metropolitans. Further, he came to understand that on seeing him, the patriarch had sent word to the two remaining bishops on his side asking them to proceed to the Kuruppanpady church without any delay. Meanwhile, Mar Elias started the conversation in a sort of an informal way, with the possible intention of moving on to the business on hand. Having discerned that the patriarch had some serious aim in mind, Mar Dionysius cut short the matter. If the purpose is to conduct a formal trial, he said, he would have no objection, but then he should be given advance

notice to that effect and sufficient opportunity for self-defence. After holding a little chit-chat for some time, the metropolitan left the place in good greace. Thus the plan of holding a formal trial of Mar Dionysius fizzled out.

Mar Elias III lived in Kerala for about seven months and a half since that time, and he died on 12 February 1932. During this interval, while visiting churches on his side, he was met by several persons of good standing in society to see whether an understanding was possible to be worked out between him and the metropolitan in order to bring the conflict in the Church to an end. In all of them the patriarch was clear that the metropolitan's standing in the Church was not in question at all, but for peace in the Church he should abandon the catholicate.[79] In place of the catholicos, the patriarch was willing to acknowledge a dignitary with limited authority under his over-all control. The metropolitan flatly refused to yield to the proposal.

The significance of the stand adopted by Mar Dionysius VI on this point is discussed in a later chapter. Here it should be noted only that if his concern was only with establishing his personal standing in the Church, he could have submitted and made common cause with the patriarch. Though this may not have united the Church as a whole, it would have made a difference to the party positions in the Church. In any case, Mar Dionysius VI was not the man to make that compromise. He was keen that the Church of Malabar should have its rights preserved at any cost.

Patriarch Mar Elias III died at Manjinikara on 12 February 1932. On hearing the news, Mar Dionysius rushed to the place. After paying his respects to the deceased, he offered the usual prayers for the occasion. Though he gave the suggestion that the dead body should be taken to Kottayam and buried in state, this was not accepted by those concerned. The body was interred in a plot of land adjacent to the church.

The Indian visit of patriarch Mar Elias III did not, in fact, achieve anything memorable for the progress of the Malankara Syrian Church. Whether forced by circumstances or out of his own personal inclination, he stood by his predecessors, Mar Peter III and Mar Abdullah II, in demanding the Indian Church's subservient dependence on the Antiochene Syrian patriarchate. It is sad indeed that none of them

expressed a concern for the progress and well-being of the Church, which had its own history in the past and opportunities of growth and fruitful service in the future, within the setting of life in the Indian context. They tried only to bring this ancient Church under their authority as a branch of the West Syrian Church of the West Asian regions.

12. Facing the Desertion of Mar Ivanios[80]

There is no place in this work for a treatment of the story of Mar Ivanios, except, insofar as it brings out the nature of Church loyalty evinced in the life of Mar Dionysius VI. The former was about twenty-four years junior to the latter. Seeing him as a young man of promise for the service of the Church, Mar Dionysius, who then was a priest of high standing in Church circles, befriended him and offered him every possible encouragement and assistance in education and subsequent development. Thus as Father P. T. Geevarghese, he grew so close to the senior leader that after the latter was made the Malankara Metropolitan he had a respectable recognition in the Church. In this capacity he could play an important role in connection with the arrangements for the establishment of the catholicate in 1912 and the setting up of various programmes of service for the Church. Later, when he expressed the plan of starting the Bethany Ashram and through it a movement for the spiritual revival of the Church as a whole, Mar Dionysius offered him every needed support.

However, as time passed, Father P. T. Geevarghese developed a sort of dissatisfaction with the Syrian Orthodox Church and an undue admiration for Roman Catholicism. When this inclination began in him is not known for certain. In any case, without the least suspicion on the part of the Church, he was made the bishop of the Bethany Ashram as Mar Ivanios in 1925 and metropolitan in 1929. By that time he was determined in his mind to embrace the Church of Rome, which he joined in 1930, to the great sorrow and disappointment of Mar Dionysius VI, his benefactor, and a host of others in the Church who had held him in the highest of esteem and affection.

What is important for us to note in this context is the way the archbishop, to use the title which he was given in the Roman Catholic Church, had sought to involve the Malankara Syrian Church in his plan and how Mar Dionysius reacted to it. In fact he had hoped

that the bitter experience which the senior metropolitan had from the Antiochene Syrian patriarch could be worked upon to subtly persuade him and the leaders on his side to be amenable for a union with the Church of Rome. The idea was communicated by Mar Ivanios in a very diplomatic way to some friends, and when eventually it was passed on to Mar Dionysius he bluntly turned it down. In the end, when he joined the Roman Catholic Church, he had with him Mar Theophilus, a bishop of the Malankara Syrian Church, who had been consecrated as his assistant and who would do almost anything to please his revered *guru*.

Mar Dionysius VI refused to consider union with Rome mainly on account of two reasons. In the first place, he knew that the plan of Mar Ivanios would lead only to the absorption of the Church of Malabar by the Roman Catholic Church. This indeed was the very thing which the Indian Church had all along been resisting from the 16th century. Secondly and perhaps more importantly, Mar Dionysius believed that the Malankara Syrian Church, as a section of the great Eastern Orthodox ecclesiastical tradition had its own contribution to make in the Indian context, and he did not want that to be lost by being absorbed into the Church of Rome.

As we shall see, Mar Dionysius VI was not opposed to Church union; neither was he unreasonably conservative to the point of being narrow-minded. But he had an appreciation for the Indian Church, which he keenly cherished. As regards the plan of Mar Ivanios, he felt that it was tantamount to a betrayal of a heritage entrusted to him by God. In fact, when we look back on what the archbishop did in joining the Church of Rome, we shall realize that it did not really achieve anything particularly impressive for the cause of Christian unity in Kerala; it created only another division in the Church.

13. The Last Days

Subsequent to his victory in court in 1930 Mar Dionysius felt free to address himself to organizing matters related to the Church. The visit of patriarch Elias III did not affect his programme in this direction in any serious manner. Two things to which he paid attention in this connection deserve mention. One, he prepared the ground for establishing a seminary for the training of candidates for the Church's

ministry; and two, he concentrated on the drawing up of a constitution for the Church.

The seminary began in a small way during the life time of the metropolitan himself. It did, in fact, grow into the Orthodox Theological Seminary of today. Thus the dream of Mar Dionysius II who originally founded it in 1815 and of Mar Dionysius VI himself who, as a priest, taught there for a number of years, has come true, after a long period of stress and strain.

Mar Dionysius VI involved himself in the drawing up of a constitution for the guidance of the Church during the last days of his life in the world, and he made a draft for the same. Though he did not live to see it adopted officially by the Church, he can be credited with having led the way to its final formulation.

About a year before his death, Mar Dionysius VI got ready his Will, making over all the properties of the Church administered by him to the episcopal synod of the Church, after his time. The patriarchal side raised objection to its adoption in court, soon after his death. But it had no effect, as the court dismissed the case. The Will was then registered and formally executed.

Mar Dionysius VI fell sick on 20 February 1934. After receiving the benefits of all the sacred rites with full participation, he bade farewell to his earthly life on 23 February 1934 in triumph and glory. An illustrious leader, Mar Dionysius served the Malankara Syrian Church as its Metropolitan for a period of twenty-five years. During most of that time, he was involved either in litigation or in struggles of various other kinds. In the midst of this painful condition, he moved on to the goal which, he believed, God had for the Church, in unwavering faith, sincere devotion and dauntless courage. Like St. Paul, he did not claim to have reached the end, but pressed on toward the goal, leaving us in a debt of gratitude, and entrusting us with the responsibility of carrying forward his dream about the Malankara Church.

CHAPTER THREE

Mar Dionysius, A Church Leader

In June 1911, when patriarch Mar Abdullah was persuaded to excommunicate Mar Dionysius VI, he listed a number of allegations against the metropolitan.[1] All these were declared unproved and as such indefensible by the courts of law, which took up the issue for legal assessment. The district court of Trivandrum. in particular, had the case examined exhaustively from 1913 by the special judge, G. Sankara Pillai, who gave his verdict on 16 September 1919, calling in question their validity altogether.[2] Judgments in courts may, however, be dismissed as nagative in character, so that we have to look into them more positively and see what exactly the charges implied in reality. The charges can all be put under two heads, namely that the metropolitan had violated "the orthodox faith of the holy Church," and that he did not "obey his legitimate superior". In other words, the patriarch accused the metropolitan of trespassing against the Church's faith and disobeying its authority.

1. Concerning our Sources

We have enough literature on the basis of which the doctrinal standpoint of the metropolitan and the real issue behind the alleged resistance to ecclesiastical authority can be brought out. His earliest work, *Mathopadeshasarangal,* or "Basic Doctrines of Religion", has already been mentioned.[3] This small book reflects the faith of the man while as a priest he taught at the seminary. In it the author deals with the teaching of the Church concerning God, the sacraments, prayer, fasting, man and his salvation, and similar subjects. The book touches on most of the issues of faith, which concern an ordinary member of the Church. Though we have evidence that over the years he elaborated some of the emphases in it, he did not change any fundamentals of the faith listed in it.

In the preface to the work the author states that he had prepared it on the strength of ideas collected mostly from the writings of Gregorios Bar Ebraya,[4] to whom we have already referred. Besides, the

Basic Doctrines points to ideas from the treatise on sacramental celebration by Moses Bar Keepha, an Antiochene Syrian Church father who had risen to fame in the 9th century and died in 913 A.D. The author was conversant in addition with the liturgical tradition of the West Syrian Church, which of course implied a theological standpoint. It is thus clear that the author drew his inspiration from the fathers of the Syrian Church of Antioch upto the 13th century, so that we do not have the slightest evidence in the *Basic Doctrines* that its writer deviated from the faith.

The period of the author's teaching at the seminary was the last decade of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th century. That was the time when the Church which he served was most intensely pre-occupied with a repudiation of ideas propagated by the Mar Thoma Syrian Church in its zeal for promoting its reform efforts. The *Basic Doctrines* takes pains to teach the faith in opposition to them in the light of West Syrian patristic tradition, citing biblical texts profusely. His purpose indeed was to offer scriptural authority for all points in the faith and tradition of the 'Jacobite' Church,[5] which the reformed body had been subjecting to incessant criticism on the strength of the Bible. Whether the texts produced by the author were enough to convince the other side or not, it is clear that he knew the Bible well enough. It is remarkable that the author aviods all polemics in his treatment of the issues and puts the ideas only in a direct and positive manner.[6]

The standpoint adopted by the author in the *Basic Doctrines* came to be further developed by him as metropolitan, as we can see in his depositions in court. Looked at from this point of view, the *Basic Doctrines* cannot be taken to reflect the final expression of Mar Dionysius' theological and ecclesiastical positions. His more mature thinking can be seen in statements made by him in court and other contexts. Most of these are included by Paret in his monumental work, the *Malankara Nasranikal*.[7] A careful examination of these sources will show that during his later years the metropolitan tried to obtain a knowledge of the official teaching of the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Churches.[8] By then he had begun to view more critically the patriarch's claim of authority over the Indian Church than he had done in the past. Further, he paid more serious attention to the need of helping the Malankara Church gain its autonomy than he

could while he was young. During the early days he was thoroughly enthusiastic about promoting the traditions of the Syrian Church of Antioch, to the neglect of seeking a viable selfhood for the Malankara Church within the Indian context.

However, in expounding Church doctrines, he did never go beyond what he had learned from the Antiochene Syrian fathers. In fact, he never had a chance to work with the writings of eastern Church fathers like Athanasius of Alexandria, the Cappadocian theologians, Cyril of Alexandria, Severus of Antioch, and so on, which the churches of the East look upon as classical. These were not available to him, or for that matter, to any one else in the Church of Malabar, so that this inadequacy was not a fault of Mar Dionysius VI. In any case, the fact is that, in the area of expounding the faith, if he erred, it was on the side of the Syrian patriarch, and not against him.

The same comment should be made about Mar Dionysius' knowledge of Church history. His chief source in this field was the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bar Ebraya. In Kerala there were manuscript copies of the work, so that he could read them. In the area of Church history, copies of books produced in English during the 18th and 19th centuries were also available in Kerala during those times, and men like E. M. Philip had used them. Mar Dionysius does not refer to such works, though he says that he had read some of them.[9] It is possible that his involvements in law suits did not leave him free either to read them well or to examine the historical writing of Bar Ebraya more critically than he actually did. It is also possible that in his excessive admiration for everything West Syrian, he ascribed undue authority to Bar Ebraya.

Whatever the case may be, the fact about Mar Dionysius VI is that, contrary to what patriarch Abdullah tried to make out, he was deeply rooted in the faith, traditions and history of the Church, in the same way as the Antiochene Syrians held them. As we have seen, the visit of patriarch Peter III in 1875 and the memorable victory which he scored over Mathews Mar Athanasius and his party had created in him, as well as in many others in the Church at that time, a new thrill and a sense of Church loyalty in conformity with the Antiochene Syrians, which he cherished all the way in his life.

There is an equally important point about Mar Dionysius VI which should be noted in this connection. Out of an all-embracing admiration for the West Syrian traditions which he imbibed, as much as almost any one else in the Malankara Church, he was not led to pay a deserving attention to the history and traditions of the Church of Malabar before the Portuguese came to India in the 16th century. Here again, the fault ascribable to the metropolitan is not that he betrayed the Antiochene Syrian tradition in anything, but that he stood by them uncritically.

The fact then about Mar Dionysius is that, while continuing to be very close to the Antiochene Syrian Church, he worked to lay a foundation for the establishment of autonomy for the Malankara Church. It is the nature of that autonomy which should concern us here. In discussing it, we shall take up first the faith which he tried to conserve in the Church, and then the character of autonomy which he sought to gain for it.

2. The Issue Concerning the Faith

The character of the Antiochene Syrian Church may be seen broadly speaking in three factors: a) The acceptance of a faith; b) the maintenance of a liturgical tradition; and c) the adoption of a life of discipline. It is to be admitted that Mar Dionysius did not adopt any change in the second and the third of these three factors, so that we shall take up here very briefly the question concerning the Church's faith.

The *Basic Doctrines* begins with a statement on God. Four sections devoted for the purpose deal respectively with the doctrine of the holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and his incarnation, and God the Holy Spirit. On this subject Mar Dionysius continued to be consistent in his position over the years. On 19 September 1918 he deposed in court:[10] "In Godhead there are the three persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. As the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is also God. These three persons are of the same being, without the least difference among them. As omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent,[11] they are co-equal. They are co-eternal, so that none of them is older or younger than either of the other two". Needless to say, all these emphases are interwoven in the theological and liturgical tradition of the Antiochene Syrian

Church.[12] The only comment possible to be made about them is that in the light of the tradition that goes back to the classical period these cannot claim to be complete. As we have noted, Mar Dionysius cannot be blamed for this defect.

On 25 September 1928, while deposing in the suspension case, the metropolitan pointed out that this faith in the triune God was indispensable for salvation. The 'Jacobite' Church, states the metropolitan, and the Roman Catholic Church hold the faith that God is triune, though they do not have the same teaching in regard to the procession of the Holy Spirit.[13] We shall take up this point a little later.

As regards the Incarnation of the Son, the *Basic Doctrines* affirms the faith in this way. The second person of the holy Trinity, in consonance with the will of the Father and the Holy Spirit, united to himself manhood which he assumed from Mary the virgin and was born in the world as man. This union is a mystery. Confessing it, we affirm that the incarnate Son is one nature and one person, both inwardly and outwardly.[14] During his examination Mar Dionysius admitted that on this point there was difference between the 'Jacobite' Church on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Churches on the other. This is how he is reported to have stated the difference: Whereas the Church of Rome confesses two natures, two wills, and two *parsupa* in the Son, the 'Jacobite' Church confesses one nature, one will and one *parsupa* in him.[15] Mar Dionysius is not likely to have read into the Church of Rome a doctrine of two *parsupa,* for no Church tradition, either in the east or in the west, is known to hold it. The official position of both the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Churches, as also of the Byzantine Orthodox Churches, is that Jesus Christ is one person and one *parsupa,* or one person both inwardly and outwardly, two natures and two wills.[16]

There is a more important point which he makes about the difference. Mar Dionysius stated in court that the difference was not so grave as to declare the Churches which hold to the doctrine of two natures and two wills to be outside the sphere of Christian salvation. He was prepared to say only that, insofar as their understanding of the mystery was less perfect, the salvation which they receive in the end would lack fulness. Even this standpoint of the metropolitan can

find support in the teaching of the Antiochene Syrian Church, as seen in Bar Ebraya.[17]

Our evidence is therefore clear. With reference to the doctrine of the incarnation, Mar Dionysius VI did not adopt any position that contradicted the teaching of the Antiochene Syrian Church. Today we can say more. Theologians of the two broad Church traditions are now agreed that the divergence between them can be settled, and the Churches are also moving forward in that direction.[18] That Mar Dionysius had the prophetic insight to see this truth is indeed gratifying.

On the faith as it concerns the Holy Spirit, the *Basic Doctrines* has this to say. The Holy Spirit is God, co-equal with the Father and the Son. He is not a creature; but without a beginning and without an end, he is eternal. Proceeding from the Father, he receives from the Son and is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, and has spoken through the prophets and the apostles. As with reference to the incarnation of the Son, stated Mar Dionysius in court, in regard to the Holy Spirit also there is a difference between the 'Jacobite' Church on the one hand and the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Churches on the other,[19] in their respective teaching. Whereas the former affirms that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, the latter hold that he proceeds from the Father and the Son. This difference, clarifies the metropolitan, is also not such as to lead the churches concerned to declare each other to be ineligible for Christian salvation.

It may be observed here that by the positions adopted by Mar Dionysius in these contexts, he gave expression to a concern for friendly relations with other Churches. However, he did not do it by ignoring the tradition which the Malankara Church had inherited from the Antiochene Syrian Church. The 'Jacobite' Church teaches, he says, that its members should believe as their Church teaches. However in so doing, they do not have to say that others will not be saved.[20]

The position of Mar Dionysius here deserves commendation. As he died in 1934, he could not witness the ecumenical consensus on these questions, towards which the Churches are now moving. Theologians of the different Church traditions are now agreed, as much on the doctrine of the incarnation, as on the procession of the Holy Spirit that the difference between them can be settled without offence to

either party. It should be borne in mind that the present Antiochene patriarch Mar Zaka had no difficulty in entering into an understanding with the Church of Rome, in spite of the divergence that exists between their respective church traditions on such issues as the incarnation of God the Son in Jesus Christ and the procession of the Holy Spirit.

3. Concerning Relations with other Churches

The *Basic Doctrines* discusses briefly thirty-four subjects. All these are treated in complete harmony with the tradition of the Antiochene Syrian Church. In the course of the litigation, in its both phases, a number of these points were raised by the lawyers who defended the case for the party in favour of the patriarch. Their one purpose obviously was to establish a charge of heresy against the metropolitan and to make out that he had in fact deviated from the faith of the Church. On this ground, they planned, to move the court to give its verdict that Mar Dionysius VI had no right to occupy any leadership in the Church and hold its properties.

In the face of this ingenious effort the metropolitan had a difficult role to play. He had to show that on the question of the Church's faith and liturgical tradition he remained absolutely loyal to the heritage which he had received from the Syrian Church of Antioch. While continuing loyally within it, he laid a foundation for establishing better understanding with other Churches. Thus, without falling into the trap laid before him by legal experts, Mar Dionysius held his own ground very competently. His answers to questions related to four church traditions may be noted here. They are: a) The Roman Catholic Church; b) the Nestorian Church; c) the Anglican Church; and d) the Mar Thoma Church.

The fact should be remembered that the statements of Mar Dionysius in relation to these churches were not intended to discuss Church union. They were only answers to questions put to him by the lawyers, who had no interest in Church union, but only to please their clients. Of the four churches noted above, the Roman Catholic and the Nestorian communions should be viewed apart from the other two. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, affirms its faith in Jesus Christ in agreement with the doctrinal decree of the council of Chalcedon of 451, A.D. which the Syrian Church of Antioch vehemently disowns.[21] The Nestorian Church,[22] on the other hand, repudiates

the council of Ephesus of 431, A.D. which the Antiochene Church owns. In spite of this divergence with them, the Church of Antioch adopted the ruling that in the event of persons or communities belonging to these Churches joining it, they should not be subjected to rebaptism.[23] Mar Dionysius stands by this ruling with reference to both these Churches.[24]

Mar Dionysius admits that all the four Churches hold the doctrine of God as triune. Yet there are differences between them. On 25 October 1918 the metropolitan referred to a number of points on which the Malankara Syrian Church and the Roman Catholic Church follow divergent traditions.[25] They are in fact two Churches, which do not hold communion between them, though they recognize the validity of each other's priestly orders and sacramental life like baptism.

What, then, about the Anglican Church? On 18 September 1918 Mar Dionysius deposed,[26] "The faith of those who belong to the High Church Anglicans, with the exception of one or two points on which they agree with the Roman Catholics, is very much like that of the 'Jacobite' Syrian Church". Does, then, the 'Jacobite' Syrian Church acknowledge the Anglican Church to continue in the valid apostolic succession? So far as his knowledge went, answered Mar Dionysius, the former has not made any official decision with reference to it.[27] This answer applies as much to the Low Church Anglicans as to the High Church Anglicans.

Mar Dionysius admitted the fact that the Malankara Syrian Church had friendly relations with the Church of England, from the days of Mar Dionysius V, his predecessor, and that these have been kept up ever since. He also noted that from the time of the metropolitan before him, priests of the Church of England have been permitted to preach in the Malankara Syrian Church. "Have you celebrated in Anglican churches"? asked the lawyer on 19 September 1918. "Literally speaking, Yes", answered the metropolitan. Then he added, in celebrating, the Syrians use consecrated Tablets over the altar. Every time the celebration takes place, the celebrant places the tablet on the altar and it is upon it that the eucharistic vessels are set, so that there is no impediment of a canonical nature for the ceremonial performance of the liturgical act. He added that patriarch Peter III himself had celebrated the holy Qurbana in this way in Anglican churches while he visited England. Therefore, in holding

cordial relations with the Anglican Church, Mar Dionysius VI and the Church under his care have not trespassed against the faith inherited by them.

With reference to the Mar Thoma Church, Mar Dionysius made a number of statements in court, which deserve attention. It should be remembered that, when the Royal Court judgment was given in 1889, he was thirty-one years old, so that he had a first-hand knowledge of the way the two communities separated from each other since that event. Therefore, his statements reflect how the 'Jacobite' Church looked upon the Mar Thoma Church in the early days of the split. The basic question raised by the lawyers and answered by Mar Dionysius concerned the validity or otherwise of the priestly orders maintained in that Church.

On 19 September 1918 the metropolitan was asked whether the consecration of Thomas Mar Athanasius[28] by Mathews Mar Athanasius accorded with the faith and order of the Syrian Church. He answered that he had no direct knowledge of what had been done on that occasion, and that therefore he was not in a position to respond to the question in a satisfactory way. When pressed, however, he made this statement:[29] "My information regarding the indcident is only a sort of guesswork based on rumour. It is that Mathews Athanasius who performed the ceremony was a person, the validity of whose orders stood in doubt. For, while he was not a priest, he assumed the rank of one in priestly orders. Thus by telling a lie, he deceived the patriarch and others, and obtained the episcopal rank in a devious way". If this story is true to fact, the validity of Mathews Mar Athanasius' episcopal standing can be seriously questioned.[30] This state of doubt, said Mar Dionysius, continues with Thomas Athanasius as well. Therefore, deposed the metropolitan, he did not believe that the priests ordained by either of these men have or have not valid priestly orders. As with reference to the orders of the Anglican Church, regarding the orders of the Mar Thoma Church also, Mar Dionysius adopts a neutral stand.

Two other points made by him with reference to the orders of the Mar Thoma Church should be relevant here. One, that patriarch Peter III had excommunicated Mathews Mar Athanasius, so that he had lost his episcopal rank, and Two, that the Mar Thoma Church introduced some novel teaching. On 24 September 1918 Mar

Dionysius was asked, Why Mathews Mar Athanasius was excommunicated.[31] His answer was carefully worded. He mentioned two reasons: one, that Mathews Athanasius adopted certain new positions concerning the faith and practices of the Church from Abraham malpan of Maramon, and tried to propagate them in the Church; and two, that he strove to alienate the Church of Malabar from its connection with the see of Antioch.

The lawyer now asked the metropolitan, after Mathews Mar Athanasius was excommunicated, was it not with him that you and your family owed your ecclesiastical allegiance? "During the latter days of Mathews Athanasius", answered Mar Dionysius, "I was very young, but I remeber that my family was then on the side of Mar Dionysius V". The metropolitan admitted that till his death, Mathews Athanasius was the accredited spiritual leader of the Malankara Syrian Church, and that a large section of it had accepted him. But on account of the doctrinal aberration which he sponsored, many had dissociated themselves from him even before he was excommunicated by the patriarch. It is not therefore excommunication, but the change in faith and Church practice which he tried to introduce, that alienated many from him. The point made by Mar Dionysius, then, is that the fault ascribable to Mathews Mar Athanasius is not that he was excommunicated by the patriarch, but that he deviated from the faith and Church life.

Does this mean that excommunication has no effect on the person concerned? Mar Dionysius offers a theological answer to this question. By excommunication, he says, the gift of priesthood granted to the person concerned is not taken away from him. As the gift comes from God, no authority on earth can deprive its recepient of what the Lord of the Church is believed to have imparted to him.[32] In other words, the grace of priesthood or episcopal rank is indelible. Having stressed this theological point, Mar Dionysius goes on to say that excommunication is not without any effect. An excommunicated priest or metropolitan, if he celebrates the holy Qurbana or performs any other rite in defiance of the excommunication, it may be said that he has committed a sin. However, the sacrament concerned is valid. "The validity of the Qurbana does not depend upon the quality of life of the clergyman concerned; it depends upon the power of the Son of God who established the sacrament".[33] This may, in fact, be compared to the sacramental gift in baptism. It may happen that a person

who, after receiving baptism, abandons Church membership and joins some other religion, but if he comes back, he is not baptized again.[34]

It is this theological principle that lies behind some of the canonical stipulations, to which we have already made reference.[35] In the history of the Church at least from the 4th century there have been many excommunications. But all of them were not treated alike. Excommunication is not therefore a valid reason for saying that a person or a community is outside the priestly succession.

As regards the Mar Thoma Church, Mar Dionysius does not stress the excommunication[36] of Mathews Mar Athanasius by patriarch Mar Peter III as a flaw affecting the validity of its priestly succession. He notes only the story that Mar Athanasius had taken to unwholesome ways in securing the episcopal title,[37] and that he promoted the reform of the Church implying a doctrinal aberration.[38] Both these issues need to be clarified even today, if the Churches concerned decide to take up the question of a restoration of their unity seriously. Mar Dionysius is clear that the Orthodox Church has made no official decision, either in favour or against the validity of the Mar Thomite priestly orders, so that any action taken by the former with reference to the latter is conditional only. The fact therefore is that, while remaining completely loyal to the heritage of the Antiochene Syrian Church, Mar Dionysius VI had laid a foundation, from the side of the Orthodox community, for a movement which should, in course of time lead to better understanding between the two communities, possibly even to a union of them.

The concern of Mar Dionysius VI did not lie confined to normalizing relations between the Orthodox and the Mar Thoma Churches only. He had an equally firm sense of commitment to work for an understanding with the Anglican Church. The fact that he had taken time to read books on the faith of that Church and could say that there was essential doctrinal agreement between the Malankara Syrian Church and the High Church wing of the Anglican communion, except on points referring to the person of Christ and the procession of the Holy Spirit, on which the latter had doctrinal consensus with the Roman Catholic Church, should be remembered. Mar Dionysius was, in fact, convinced that the Orthodox, the Mar Thoma, and the

Anglican communities in India, should be encouraged to strive for closer relations among them.

It is not meant here that the metropolitan left the Roman Catholic Church out of his consideration. We have seen that he respected the Church of Rome. But he did not want the Malankara Syrian Church to merge with it, or for that matter, with any other Church. Even with the Antiochene Syrian Church, as we shall see, his point of view was that it had no right to keep this Indian Church under its tutelage. In feeling hurt when Mar Ivanios of Bethany joined the Roman Catholic Church, he expressed no aversion for the Church of Rome, but only a deep sense of disappointment that his own disciple and right-hand man had not understood him. In relation to the Church of Rome, as also to every other Church tradition, he would have insisted on mutual recognition and respect for each other's integrity, based on essential agreement in faith.

4. The Issue Concerning Autonomy

The second main charge against Mar Dionysius noted by Mar Abdullah in his letter of excommunication was that he did not "obey his legitimate superior". What the patriarch meant by this allegation is not clear in the letter. He refers, to be sure, to eight points in a sort of general way, without elucidating any one of them in concrete terms. In trying to bring out the patriarch's grievances against him, we should be reminded that Mar Abdullah on the one hand, and the co-trustees on the other, had marked out the metropolitan as a target of special attack.

The issues which created difficulties for the patriarch which we have already noted, may be put together here. a) Possibly from the time when Mar Abdullah met Mar Dionysius at Jerusalem in 1908, where the latter had gone as remban Geevarghese for his consecration, the former realized that the Indian metropolitan was not likely to support his claim of authority over the Indian Church, in the way he was keen to assert it.[39] b) The patriarch may have suspected that his plan regarding Sleeba Mar Osthathios was thwarted subsequently by the interference of Mar Dionysius. Mar Abdullah, as we have seen, had hoped to set up the Syrian metropolitan as his delegate and rule the Indian Church through him. That this idea could not be worked out was serious enough, but that the managing committee

which met in August 1908 had turned down the man's request for a diocese be given him was worse still.[40] c) 1909, after his arrival in Kerala, the patriarch was present at the death anniversary feast of Mar Gregorios of Parumala, where a substantial amount of money had come as offering from people who attended the celebration. Whether out of a desire to grab the money or with the intention of asserting his authority over the Church, the patriarch asked the metropolitan to direct those concerned to bring the entire collection to his feet. The metropolitan's answer that, as the money belonged to the community, he had no authority to disburse it without the formal approval of the managing committee, did only enrage the patriarch.[41] d) Then came the incident of November 1909, when the Church assembly indicated its unwillingness to admit the patriarch's authority beyond what the courts of law had decreed.[42] e) In this connection, the assembly's rejection of the patriarch's suggestion to have a large number of men raised to the episcopal rank, was viewed by him as a serious defeat for his cause.[43] f) To add to all these, was the failure of Mar Abdullah to obtain registered deeds from parish churches. This angered him very really.[44]

Mar Abdullah assumed that the brain behind all these incidents was metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI. In this reading the patriarch was in fact wrong, for, though the metropolitan was opposed to acknowledging the authority of the patriarch in the temporalities of the Church, there was no need for him to move a finger in this direction. Liberal English education, with its emphasis on democratic freedom to which many in the Church were then exposed, had the work done for him. It was on the whole people with this background that came out to challenge the patriarch and his demands. In fact, a group of them put out an article in the form of a letter which made three points, namely that no authority can be admitted to vest in the patriarch beyond what the courts of law had already specified, that the Church does not require more bishops than three, and that the Indian Church should have the right to consecrate its bishops.[45]

The patriarch, coming as he was from Turkey where democracy had not been heard of, could not understand the thinking of the people in Kerala, so that he took the metropolitan to be rebellious and proceeded to circumvent him, looking upon him as an enemy. The only way he saw to achieve the goal then was to persuade metropolitan

Paulose Mar Kurillos and candidates to the episcopal rank to submit to him registered deeds admitting his authority all the way. Mar Abdullah's success in this plan has already been noted.[46]

Mar Dionysius remained firm. Advice from 'well wishers', subtle persuasion, open threat, and calculated intimidation – all these were applied to extract from him a submission. But he refused to surrender the genuine rights of the Indian Church to a patriarch whose concern for it lay confined to the earthly benefits, whether in terms of authority or in those of material gains, which he could get from it. The metropolitan had a large following among members of the Church, who were ready to fight the issue, and he himself had the courage of conviction and a sense of dedication to pursue the matter to the end. Leading men of the community, who then comprised its elite, were now moved to action. A number of pamphlets and other publications were put forth in order to keep the people informed of what was going on. The role played on the occasion by the *Malayala Manorama* is indeed remarkable. Besides, many efforts were made to see whether the patriarch would change his mind and avoid a split in the community, but with no success. As he had the unstinting support of the co-trustees and their followers, the patriarch did not want to retract.

The relation between the metropolitan and the co-trustees was not cordial almost from the beginning. Both of them were strong men. Whether they had an understanding of, and a concern for, for the Church from the point of view of its mission or not, they had the mental makeup to promote their interests. Though they had served as co-trustees with Mar Dionysius V, without creating any fuss about the way the senior metropolitan was managing Church matters, they were now determined that this tradition should not be allowed to continue with the junior metropolitan.

The custom of appointing co-trustees had a history. Early in the 19th century, when the deposit money was invested with the British East India Company, the stipulation was that the interest on it should be received by the metropolitan. This arrangement continued till 1840. The Cochin Award of that year[47] laid down that in drawing on the interest on the deposit money and looking after the trust properties listed in the Award, the metropolitan should have with him two others, a priest and a layman, chosen by the community as co-trustees. In practice, however, the part played by the co-trustees consisted in

signing the receipt when the interest was being drawn and in being ready to give counsel to the metropolitan in the management of properties when that was called for. The co-trustees were more or less satisfied with this state of affairs during the days of the older metropolitan, but were now keen to see that their place was recognized more explicitly. In fact, the role which they sought to safeguard for them was not part of the original deal concerning the deposit in 1808, and the Cochin Award was not formally accepted by the Church.

Three incidents that happened after Mar Dionysius VI came on the scene aggravated the problem. a) *The keys of the beth gaza:* The old seminary had a room, known as the *Beth Gaza,* where properties of value that belonged to the Church were used to be kept in safe custody. During the days of Mar Dionysius V, he was keeping its keys with him, and nobody raised any objection. A short time before his death, he passed on the keys to his successor, who took up the matter with the managing committee held subsequently and got the transfer ratified.[48] The co-trustees now put forth the claim that all the three trustees should have each of them a key of the room in his keeping. b) *The disposal of a landed property:* A piece of land had been purchased at Alleppey in order to build on it a church. Since the required sanction of the government was not forthcoming, it was sold. The co-trustees were not consulted on the matter. The point made by Mar Dionysius in court when the issue was raised there was that the property did not form part of the trust, so that there was no need for any consultation with them.[49] c) *A Managing Committee decision:* A meeting of the managing committee in August 1909, in addition to sanctioning the transfer of the keys of the *beth gaza,* passed a resolution against the interests of the co-trustees. The meeting resolved that, if the three trustees could not agree on a course of action, felt to be urgent, the metropolitan had the right to go on with his plan and obtain the approval of the managing committee at its subsequent meeting.[50] The trustees raised their protest, but with no effect.

We can observe here that two forces joined together with a view to crushing the metropolitan. The patriarch, on his part, saw in him a stupendous obstacle in the way of asserting his claim of authority over the temporalities of the Church. The co-trustees, on the other side, were keen to humiliate him for refusing to associate them with him in the administration of the Church properties. The argument that

the properties in question were not part of the Trust did not satisfy them. In order to gain their end, they joined hands with the patriarch, granting all his demands.

What, then, was the standpoint of the metropolitan with reference to the authority of the patriarch? On 21 August 1918 Mar Dionysius deposed that the authority of the patriarch should be governed by the provisions of the Royal Court judgment, the provisions of cannon law contained in the *Hudaya,* the decisions of the synod of Mulanthuruthy of 1876, and above all by tradition.[51] The positions conserved in the judgment and the decisions of Mulanthuruthy, insofar as they are relevant to our discussion, may be noted here.

The judgment of the royal court of Travancore, which its counterpart of Cochin ratified later, contained in the main the following three points.[52] a) Insofar as there is evidence, it is only in spiritual matters that the patriarch has exercised jurisdiction over the Church of Malabar. b) The Malankara Metropolitan should be a national from Kerala, who is acceptable to the people of the Church. c) A person who, even if he is validly consecrated by the patriarch himself, unless he is accepted by the people, cannot obtain the right to administer the temporalities of the Church.

The two Hindu judges[53] constituting the majority of the panel held that, from the middle of the 18th century, the patriarch and his representatives had been trying to involve themselves in the administration of the Malankara Church, but that they were all resisted by the Indian metropolitan and the people. In other words, the Church of Malabar was independent, so far as its internal administration went. Thus the judgment guaranteed the Church of Malabar its autonomy under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Antiochene patriarch.

The judgment is in fact consonant with the decision of the synod of Mulanthuruthy. It was this synod that instituted the Malankara Association and its Managing Committee, insisting that the *majilis* in Kerala was equal in status to the *majilis* in Syria. By this arrangement, stated the metropolitan, the principle was established that the Association has complete authority in temporal matters.[54] Therefore, when the Church needs new bishops, the candidates should be formally chosen by the Association, and if a metropolitan is to be excommunicated the Association should have its concurrence in the decision.

In the light of this established principle, the patriarch has no authority by himself to take any disciplinary action on a bishop of the Church of Malabar.

Mar Dionysius explained his position as it refers to the Malankara Syrian Church, by noting the evolution of Church polity during its formative days. The point made by him can be thus summarized. The Church had its hierarchy consisting of the three orders of *episcopa* (bishop), *presbyter* (priest), and deacon, in all provinces, where it existed. Each province had its college of bishops, chief of whom was the metropolitan, with priests and deacons serving under their direction. The metropolitan, like other bishops, was himself the *episcopa* of a town, that is a diocese. It is the college of bishops in every province that met in synods presided over by the metropolitan, who consecrated bishops for the province concerned. As the *episcopa* of the chief town of a province, the metropolitan convened the synods and presided over them. Whenever necessity arose, the synods met. It was the synods which took disciplinary action against erring bishops. Thus each province was a self-contained unit of the Church universal. The title 'patriarch' came to be applied to metroplitans of certain major cities, only from about the 4th century. The patriarch himself was the *episcopa* of a town, where alone he had the right to exercise temporal authority.[55]

The Church of Malabar, though on account of historical limitations, it had not been organized into an ecclesiastical province of the kind described above,[56] is in fact a province and should be so recognized. The Malankara Metropolitan and the Malankara Association through its Managing Committee are competent to bring this about.[57] "Is not the patriarch", the metropolitan was asked, "the supreme authority over all ordained persons in the Church?" The patriarch has authority, answered Mar Dionysius, only in asmuch as he can claim it legally.[58] The authority of the patriarch is not arbitrary; it is to be governed by law. In other words, the metropolitan made the point that the authority asserted by Mar Abdullah and conceded by his opponents, has no basis in law.

Whatever is said about the patriarch, noted Mar Dionysius, is possible to be stated about the catholicos as well. Neither of them has the authority on his own to enquire into the accusations raised against

an *episcopa* or a metropolitan, who is not directly under the administrative control of his province, or to call him for an examination.[59] The standpoint adopted by Mar Dionysius on the question of the relation between the Church of Malabar and the patriarch should be clear. He does not admit that either the patriarch or the catholicos has the right of direct administrative responsibility beyond his own immediate diocese or province. Both of them preside over the synods of the Church and enjoy the right of general supervision in it.

In 1918, when Mar Dionysius was being examined, there was no catholicos at Kottayam. The first incumbent of the office, Mar Ivanios Murimattam, had died in May 1913, and the second was not installed till 1925. However, the metropolitan was asked: Was not the catholicos installed to break off relations with the patriarch, by asserting independence of the Indian Church? No, said the metropolitan. Even while the catholicos is there, the Church of Malabar has its relation with the see of Antioch. It objects only to the unlawful interference in its affairs by the patriarch and his assertion of indefensible authority over it.

On the question concerning the excommunication of a metropolitan, Mar Dionysius clarified his position further. Though the Malankara association should concur in the decision, the issue against the metropolitan in question should be examined, not by the managing committee as such, but by the synod of bishops. In this connection Mar Dionysius draws a line of demarcation between the episcopal wing and the non-episcopal wing in the Church. The latter has every right to get involved in the administration of the finances and other temporal matters connected with the Church, but not in matters related to the faith and discipline. The provision to this effect, which the Constitution contains, goes back in reality to Mar Dionysius. This point of view has implications of a theological nature, bearing on the meaning of the Church in the Christian faith, which cannot be taken up here. The point made by Mar Dionysius is this. When an issue is raised against a metropolitan, the episcopal wing should exercise its right to examine him and give its judgment. But the judgment should be such as the non-episcopal wing also would endorse it.

We can observe in all these discussions that Mar Dionysius was drawing heavily on the book of the *Hudaya*,[60] particularly the early

parts of chapter 7 of the work. During the period of the litigation in court, the *Vattipana case,* the metropolitan had the profound concern to establish the point that the Church of Malabar was in fact an ecclesiastical unit noted in the *Hudaya,* so that it had its own integrity and individuality which the patriarch had no right to violate. At that time the Malankara Church did not have its catholicos. The argument was therefore that the Malankara Church in itself constituted a province of the Church with its own innate selfhood and identity. But by the time the suspension case was moved in court in 1928 the catholicos was there at Kottayam. Mar Dionysius could now make the point that the Church of Malabar was, to be sure, an ecclesiastical province with its own catholicos, in place of the patriarch. On this ground he could insist that the Malankara Church was not breaking off relations with the see of Antioch, but that the relations were the same as those that had existed between the catholicos and the patriarch.

Mar Dionysius VI stood all the way for the safeguarding of the Malankara Syrian Church's integrity and selfhood, so that it may enjoy all privileges in the same way as any other ecclesiastical province. However, he respected the history of the Church from the time of the synod of Mulanthuruthy of 1876, so much that he never tried to separate the Indian Church from its connection with the Antiochene Syrian Church.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Historic Achievement

It is not the triumph in legal battles which Mar Dionysius VI pursued that constitutes his real achievement. That lies, to be sure, in the establishment of the catholicate.

1. The Significance of the Catholicate

The refusal of the patriarchs to acknowledge the catholicate for the Malankara Syrian Church does eloquently proclaim that it is a precious institution. We may recall here that, though Mar Abdul Messiah was willing to cooperate with Mar Dionysius VI and his episcopal colleagues in instituting the office at Kottayam in 1912, no other patriarch was prepared to adopt that line of action. The reaction of the patriarchs is not very different even now. Though, for instance, the Jacobite body in Kerala that supports the patriarch has a catholicos at present, it is a fact that he is not permitted to enjoy in full the rights and privileges which go with the office. It is, in fact, only a name, an honorary name, which qualifies its bearer to fulfil certain duties under the direction of the patriarch, not on his own right.

Why, then, do the patriarchs adopt a negative stand here? It is clear that they see in the institution a threat to their claim of authority over the Indian Church. The patriarchs are not willing to recognize a full-fledged catholicate for the Church of Malabar because they see that it will bring to an end the possibility of their interference in its life.

That this is the truth of the matter can be shown by referring to the way patriarch Peter III acted in 1876. As we have seen, after dividing the Church into seven dioceses and appointing a metropolitan for each of them, he subtly withheld from them their genuine right to meet as the episcopal synod of the Church, under the chairmanship of one of them. What the patriarch did here is very important. As we have noted,[1] if he had duly recognized this right, the leader so chosen would have been in a position to assume the dignity of a catholicos or

a patriarch. Mar Peter III, to be sure, guessed this possibility and carefully forestalled it. Accordingly, he enjoined on each metropolitan he consecrated in Kerala, to lead his diocese without reference to other metropolitans of the Malankara Syrian Church, but only under the direct jurisdiction of the patriarch. This arrangement, if it were implemented, would have led to the formation of seven mutually independent churches in Kerala, each under the supremacy of the patriarch. But it did not work out because of Mar Dionysius V's ability to befriend the metropolitans and keep them in his fellowship.

Bearing these facts in mind, we can say what the catholicate in fact is. In simple words, it refers to the office of the ecclesiastical dignitary who holds the right to represent and guide the community as a whole. In the Malankara Syrian Church, for example, there are deacons, priests and bishops or metropolitans. Every one of them belongs to the Church's hierarchy, but none of them, including the metropolitan, can be said strictly to represent the whole Church; this role is fulfilled by the catholicos. From about the 4th century such supervisory role devolved on the metropolitans of certain important centres in the then Roman empire, and they came to be called patriarchs. But, as we shall see, outside the empire where the Church spread, the incumbent of the office was catholicos. The refusal of the patriarchs to recognize that office for the Church of Malabar, implied a denial of the Church's right to self-determination. Patriarch Peter III was keen, on the other hand, that the Malankara Syrian Church should remain dependent on him and his successors for ever. In other words, the patriarch was reluctant to face the reality that the Indian Church, as his own Church in Syria or the Church in any other part of the world, has its basic right to develop within its social and cultural conditions, enjoying its freedom of life, under its own leader.

2. The Problem faced by Mar Dionysius VI

It was not difficult for Mar Dionysius to realize the inability of the patriarchs to appreciate the genuine needs of the Malankara Syrian Church. He may have recalled the efforts of patriarch Peter III to bring the Indian Church and its members to conform to the ways of life followed by people in Syria.[2] Then in connection with his consecration and subsequently in his personal dealings, he came to understand that Mar Abdullah was seeking to carry out more concretely

the plan of his predecessor. His experience with Mar Elias III which he had from 1923 did not give him a better impression of the Antiochene Syrian ecclesiastical leadership. Naturally, he was convinced that the Malankara Syrian Church needed a liberation. However, to free the Church from tutelage to the Syrian patriarchs was not easy; for the Church, including Mar Dionysius himself, had three serious limitations.

a) **The Synod of Mulanthuruthy**

The Church assembly of 1876, as we have seen, had formally acknowledged the jurisdiction of the patriarch and even resolved to continue the connection in future. Following this event, the verdict of the royal court, by which Mar Dionysius V had won the case against the reform party in 1889, established the point that the patriarch had the right of spiritual supervision in the Church. Thus at least from 1876 the patriarch had been admitted to have a central place in the Church. The result was that, without his approval, it was impossible for the Malankara Syrian Church to move forward in the direction of exercising its right of self-determination.

b) **Internal disharmony**

At least from the 18th century there was no real union and cohesion of hearts and minds among the different sections of people in the Church. Family rivalries, bickerings among members and personal animosities of various kinds, made it difficult for the community to take a united action to get over the problem created by the synod of Mulanthuruthy. Since the time the patriarch was known to be accessible, possibly from about the 18th century, there were people in the Church who would approach him with complaints against fellow-believers, so that the patriarch could count on a party of his own in the Church.

Mar Dionysius VI, as we have seen, had to suffer from this trait of his people very really. His co-trustees turned against him, and his brother-metropolitan Paulose Mar Kurillos renounced him, without even trying to understand his point of view. All the three of them and their associates opposed Mar Dionysius, with a determination somehow to pull him down and support the unjust demands of the patriarch, whose love for the Malankara Syrian Church was limited to what he could gain from it. On account of this quality of the make-up of his people no programme of action for the good of the community, in which all sections of the Church joined, could even be attempted.

c) **Undue veneration for the Syriac language and Syrian traditions**

The Indian Church had from very early times a special love for the Syriac language and the writings contained in it. Two forms of the language—the Chaldean or the Eastern, and the Antiochene or the Western—had come to Kerala over the centuries. Though till the 19th century, the former was widespread in the Church, the Antiochene Syrian fathers who were in Kerala from 1751 to 1794 put in a consistent effort to have it replaced by the latter. Yet, we have evidence that Mar Dionysius I who died in 1808 had employed the former in his communications. This situation changed in the 19th century and the Western Syriac, which is in use in the Orthodox Church now, came to be the ecclesiastical language of the Malankara Syrian Church.[3]

Manuscript copies of religious books produced in that language were brought to India from about the 17th century, and they were copied in Kerala. Some of the metropolitans like Mar Gregorios of Parumala and Mar Ivanios Murimattam, whom patriarch Peter III consecrated in 1876, could use the language with a certain amount of ease, and in all probability they had read these books. Mar Dionysius VI, as we have already noted, learned the language under the guidance of these illustrious men. Thus he became conversant with the traditions of the Antiochene Syrian Church in the areas of Church history, theology, canon laws and liturgy. In fact, Mar Dionysius and his teachers before him had endeavoured to lead the Indian Church to conform to the Antiochene Syrian ways in all these matters, with a zeal excelling that of the Syrians themselves.

It is within this broad context that the catholicate, the institution guaranteeing the Church its right of self-determination, was established in 1912. Since the community was divided, Mar Dionysius expected a tough fight from the party opposed to him, which supported the patriarch. He was therefore very careful that the step he took in the matter was legally defensible, so that in case the party opposed to him raised the issue in court, he could comfortably hold his own ground. The way in which he worked to achieve the goal deserves our reverent attention.

3. **The Catholicate of Tagrith**

By the reading of Syrian Church history as preserved in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Gregorios Bar Ebraya[4], the 13th century Syrian

father whom we have already noted, as well as some of his other writings, particularly the book of *Hudaya,* Mar Dionysius and a number of others in the Malankara Syrian Church, had come to know the catholicos of Tagrith, whom the Syrians used to call the Maphrian or the Catholicos of the East. In fact, Bar Ebraya tries to make out that the Antiochene Syrian Church included two ecclesiastical units, each with its own right to self-determination. One of them was of course in the Syrian provinces under the direction of the patriarch himself, and the other in the Mesopotamian regions, which at one time was part of the ancient empire of Persia, led by a maphrian with his seat at Tagrith. Though the patriarch had a primacy of honour, it was formally admitted by the parties concerned that he had no right to interfere in the spiritual or temporal affairs of the Church under the jurisdiction of the maphrian.

Now in his struggle with patriarch Abdullah, Mar Dionysius saw that the maphrian or catholicos of the East, being a church dignitary approved within the Antiochene Syrian tradition itself, if it could be established in Kerala, that would solve the problem created by the dependent status of the Malankara Syrian Church and safeguard its ecclesiastical integrity.

The big question then was: How can the catholicate be instituted in India? In the face of the Mulanthuruthy decision of 1876 and the royal court judgment of 1889, this could be accomplished only in one of two ways. One, the Church should unitedly pass a formal resolution quashing the agreement of 1876 and break with the patriarch once and for all, and then proceed to instal its own leader. Since the community was divided and the patriarch had a party to support him, this was not workable. Moreover, Mar Dionysius, who should take the lead in such a programme, had his personal inclination in favour of the Antiochene Syrian Church and its patriarch. Two, an attempt should be made to persuade the patriarch himself to cooperate in the establishment of the catholicate. This was found to be possible, and Mar Dionysius worked on it. Thus patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah was contacted and, as we have seen, the catholicate was instituted.

The catholicate at Kottayam, as we have just noted, was not intended by Mar Dionysius to lead the Church to break off its relation with the patriarch or the Syrian Church of Antioch. Its aim, on the

other hand, was to gain for the Church of Malabar its right to self-determination, while it continued in the fulness of fellowship with the patriarch and his Church. Mar Dionysius made this point clearly in his depositions in court and showed it forth in action by the Mardin trip which he undertook in 1923. Again, with this purpose in mind, he contacted the leading prelates of the Antiochene Syrian Church, after the death of patriarch Elias III, demanding an official representation of the Indian Church and the canonically required participation of the catholicos in the election and installation of the new patriarch.[5] This, of course, was turned down, or ignored, but the metropolitan made it clear all the same that he had no plan to cut off the Indian Church from its connection with the patriarch and the Antiochene Syrian Church.

Even a cursory reading of the statements made by Mar Dionysius in court and elsewhere will bear out this fact. Some of his own words in this respect may be noted here on the strength of Paret's reproductions in his monumental work.

a) **The Catholicate of Tagrith transferred to Kottayam**

The Catholicos of Kottayam, shows the metropolitan, is the same dignitary who had occupied the see of Tagrith in former times. On 18 September 1928 he was asked by the lawyer during cross examination: Is the catholicate of Tagrith in existence now? The catholicate of Kottayam, he answered, being that of Tagrith transferred there, it does really exist.[6] On 21 September of the same year he made the point that the catholicate does not exist at Tagrith. The office happened to become extinct there for a period of time, because the Church in that region had grown so weak that it had only Mosul to look after. The Indian Church, on the other hand, was strong and growing, so that it needed the office for its more effective service. For this reason, the catholicate was reinstituted at Kottayam.[7]

As to who should carry out the transfer, the metropolitan answered that this should be done by the catholicos himself, as he is the person who would be most affected by it, but it should be according to need and the capability of the place where the transfer is effected. There is no need for the patriarch to be involved in it.

The Tagrithan catholicate being an ecclesiastical office situated in a Mesopotamian city, how can that be transferred to Kerala?

What connection did it have with the Indian Church? The Indian Church, said the metropolitan, had formed part of the Tagrithan Church, so that the change of place was natural. What evidence do we have to argue that the Indian Church was under the jurisdiction of the see of Tagrith? The Tagrithan catholicate is referred to as the "Catholicate of the East". India is included in the 'East', so that the Indian Church should have been with the Tagrithan Church.

It should be admitted that the answer of Mar Dionysius here may seem rather weak and vulnerable. Yet the standpoint adopted by him deserves sympathetic understanding. He was faced with attacks from his opponents who argued that, by establishing the catholicate, he was endeavouring to bring into being a new church, presided over by a new dignitary, with the definite intention of cutting off the historic connection with the patriarch, so that he and those who joined him had gone out of the Malankara Syrian Church. In meeting this challenge, he pointed out that he was keen to continue the connection with the patriarch, and that the catholicate of Kottayam was the same office which had functioned officially within the ecclesiastical set-up of the Antiochene Syrian Church itself.[8]

Changing of the locale of a see from one city to another is a fact with reference to a number of important centres, including that of the Roman papacy itself. The great sees of Alexandria, Antioch, Seleucia, not to mention others, have all moved from their ancient venues to more convenient and suitable places, so that there is nothing particularly degrading or unworthy about it.

Mar Dionysius says here that the catholicate established at Kottayam, in cooperation with patriarch Abdul Messiah, is the catholicate of Tagrith transferred from Mesopotamia. It is this tradition that is followed in the Malankara Orthodox Church ever since. What this emphasis means in reality should be clearly noted. It is obvious that this is not a statement based on a systematic study of the history of the catholicate of Tagrith and its relation to the Indian Church. To be sure, Mar Dionysius does not claim to be a historian in that sense. What he does, on the other hand, is to clarify the nature of the catholicate, as it applies to the Church of Malabar. Three points deserve attention here. One, by the establishment of the catholicate, the Church was endeavouring to transcend the provision of the royal

court judgment of 1889. It made out that, though the patriarch had tried from 1751 to assert his authority even in temporal matters, he was resisted. The Church allowed him only to exercise spiritual supervision. With the establishment of the catholicate at Kottayam, this spiritual supervision enjoyed by the patriarch goes to the catholicos, the incumbent of that office. Two, the court had admitted that the patriarch was a party in matters concerning the Indian Church, so that the participation of the patriarch in the establishment of the catholicate was necessary. Three, the catholicate which patriarch Abdul Messiah cooperated with the Church of Malabar to establish at Kottayam is, in his own words, 'the Catholicos of the East'. It was indeed with the catholicate of Tagrith that the patriarch had dealings.[9] Mar Dionysius reflects this fact in his statements. What he implied by it deserves our appreciation.

The catholicate is definitely not a unique office localized exclusively at Tagrith, so that if it is felt to be necessary in another place, it has to be shifted from its Mesopotamian habitat. What is to be pressed about the catholicate at Kottayam, is not therefore that it has been physically shifted from Tagrith, but it is the same office as that of the catholicos of that Mesopotamian city, devoid of course of the spiritual suzerainty of the Antiochene patriarch over it.

There is a broader question here. Can the Indian Church, particularly in the face of its own problems in modern life, be satisfied with a catholicate of the kind which Tagrith had in olden times, for the exercise of its right to self-determination? Though this is an important issue for serious consideration, we cannot take it up for a discussion here. In the present context we need to be reminded of the fact that Mar Dionysius VI succeeded in having a catholicate established for the Church, and thereby ensured the continuance of the Malankara Syrian Church as a self-moving, self-determining, and self-evolving ecclesiastical unit.

b) The Authority of the Patriarch

On 24 September 1918 Mar Dionysius was asked by the lawyer in court: When did the title 'patriarch' come to be in use in the Church[10] The metropolitan answered: In the canon law book, the *Hudaya*, the term 'patriarch' is employed in a ruling that had come from the council of Nicea in 325, so that it must go back to the period of that council.

The reference here is to chapter 7, section 1 of the *Hudaya*. The metropolitan refers to some other bases also to maintain that the title is not older than the 4th century.

The answer of Mar Dionysius here does, in fact, reflect a confusion, which many have made both before and after the time of the metropolitan, so that he cannot be blamed exclusively for it. The council of Nicea adopted 20 canons, in which this stipulation is not recorded. This is found, on the other hand, in a medieval collection known as the *Arabic Canons of Nicea,* which is not older than the 9th century; it cannot as such be traced back to the 4th century. The point made by the metropolitan in this context is in fact the reflection of a fiction, which many historians believed to be a true account. The title 'patriarch', which means 'chief of the fathers', had not been employed invariably for the incumbents of the major sees like Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch, even in the 5th century. The emergence of the 'patriarch' as a dignitary above the 'metropolitan' or the 'bishop' belongs to a much later time.[11]

The practice of the Church prior to that period is possible to be brought out on the strength of records of previous times. Mar Dionysius himself refers to it on the basis of stipulations contained in the *Hudaya.* On 12 July 1918 he stated in his deposition that the hierarchy of the Church consisted of the three ranks of bishop, presbyter and deacon. They have different gifts granted to them at the ordination.[12] Each of these ranks underwent in course of time proliferations. The rank of the bishop, for example, developed into six grades, namely bishop or episcopa, metropolitan, archbishop, catholicos, maphrian, and patriarch. Though they differ in title and responsibilities, the priestly grace which they receive is the same. Granting this, the metropolitan admitted that the patriarch occupied the most honoured place in the Orthodox tradition.

It is a fact of history that corresponding to the political divisions of the empire into provinces, districts, and so on, that go back to the reign of emperor Diocletian towards the end of the 3rd century, the Church also adopted necessary arrangements for its smooth administration. At the council of Nicea these were assumed. It was enjoined, as we have noted,[13] that in every province bishops should be raised by the synod of bishops presided over by the *metropolitan,* who was the bishop of the province's capital or *metropolis.* If all the bishops

could not come together, at least three of them should meet and the rest should send in their agreement.[14] In other words, the canon of Nicea stipulated that bishops were to be consecrated in every province by the synod of its bishops. From the time of the council of Constantinople of 381, the Church acknowledged Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch as its most important centres. The prelates occupying them began to be called 'patriarchs'. It should be remembered however that at the council of Chalcedon of 451 they were referred to interchangeably as 'bishop' or 'archbishop', not as 'patriarch.'[15]

In the Antiochene Syrian Church it was patriarch Severus bar Mesaqe (667-680) who for the first time in its history, possibly in the history of the entire Church as well, put forward the claim that, as patriarch, he should consecrate all bishops in his Church. Though he was stiffly opposed by senior metropolitans who insisted, on the ground of custom prevailing till then, of their predecessors performing all consecrations in their provinces, that they would not give it up, the departure introduced by the patriarch came to be adopted by the Syrian Church in course of time. It is interesting to note that in answer to the metropolitans who opposed him, patriarch Severus bar Mesaqe, granted the fact concerning custom, but observed that it should not be allowed to continue on account of changed circumstances in the world.[16] The incident shows that till the end of the 7th century the Syrian patriarchs were consecrating bishops only in their close neighbourhood, and not in the Syrian Church as a whole.

This departure from the older practice led to another development in the Antiochene Syrian Church. It came to be insisted that the patriarch in person, or in emergent situations his specially authorized deputies, alone have the right to consecrate bishops. It is on the tradition developed in this way that the Antiochene Syrian fathers who came to Kerala from the middle of the 18th century, and patricrach Peter III in the 19th and his successors in the 20th century insisted.

A historian can see two stages in the development of this tradition. One, the arrangement enjoined by the council of Nicea that a bishop should be consecrated by at least threebishops of the province concerned. Obviously, as we have already noted, the concern of the council of Nicea in 325 was to avoid division in the Church. Two, the patriarch should have a decisive role in all episcopal consecrations,

either in personally performing the ceremony or in authorizing a deputy to do it on his behalf. Though we have no straight forward evidence to bring out the way bishops were raised during the period prior to the council of Nicea, we have enough basis to say that no such insistence then existed.

What is to be noted here is that the foregoing development of the Church's hierarchy affected the Church of Malabar, which had never passed through the process, in a serious way. Following the Oath of the Coonen Cross of 1653, as we have seen, the community had to raise archdeacon Thomas to the episcopal rank by the laying on of hands of twelve priests. Now his supporters were eager to have his position regularized and his opponents denounced him as a fake metran. Both sides drew inspiration from a tradition traceable to the Nicene injunction. Then from about the middle of the 18th century the question of patriarchal involvement in the consecration of bishops was made a sort of trump card by the party that supported the patriarch to defeat their opponents.

Mar Dionysius VI saw this anomaly, and he was determined to work for the liberation of the Malankara Syrian Church from its unhealthy effects. To accomplish this was the rationale behind the establishment of the catholicate.

4. The Catholicate in History

We have noted above the evolution of the patriarchate in the history of the Church. That the catholicate evolved in the Church of Persia has also been noted.[17] How then did it originate? As we have seen, the catholicate of Tagrith began only in 629. How was it related to the earlier catholicate?

During the first three centuries of its historical existence, Christianity spread far and wide in the ancient Roman empire, which covered the vast geographical area from modern Iraq in the east, toward the west, including the Mediterranean regions upto Britain. From the time of the conversion of emperor Constantine to Christanity in the 3rd decade of the 4th century, this empire moved in the direction of adopting Christianity as its state religion, which became a fact from about 380 A.D. It was indeed in the Church of the Roman empire that patriarchates evolved. The Church outside the empire had a different history.

a) **The Catholicate of Seleucia**

Christianity spread to Persia, Armenia, Ethiopia, Georgia, as well as to India, from the beginning. It was with Persia that the Indian Church came in contact, possibly from the 3rd century. Including modern Iran, eastern regions of Iraq and the countries to the west of the Pubjab, Persia was a vast empire to the east of the Roman empire. It is only very seldom that the two empires lived in peace with each other.

The Christian Church expanded to the Persian regions from rather early times and Christian communities had grown in many parts within its boundaries. This was possible because the country was ruled by the Arsacid dynasty of emperors till 225 A.D., who were tolerant in matters concerning religion. Then things changed and the Sassanid dynasty replaced the Arsacids. The new emperors were on the whole conservative adherents of the Zoroastrian or the Masdaean religion, which they adopted as the official faith of the empire. However, from the beginning of their reign, they adopted a policy of giving Christianity a sort of second place in the empire, under certain conditions. For this recognition they required that the Christians should have one leader, with whom the state could deal in matters that concerned them. In this context there emerged the catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the empire's capital. This was indeed a development from within the Persian Church, either in the second half of the 3rd century or in the early part of the 4th century.

The story of the Persian catholicate with its seat at Seleucia, which is noted above is the account preserved in Persian Church sources.[18] But in Malankara Syrian Church circles, another story is currently known. It says in effect that the Persian Church is indebted to the Antiochene Church and its patriarch for its catholicate. We have derived this story from the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bar Ebraya, whom we have already noted. An Antiochene Church leader, this Syrian luminary was a catholicos or maphrian of Tagrith during the second half of the 13th century. Naturally he was keen to establish Antioch's precedence over the Church of Persia on the one hand, and the internal administrative freedom of the Persian Church on the other. In fact, this was one of the major concerns of those who produced the *Arabic Canons of Nicea,* possibly in the 9th century A.D. Bar Ebraya may well have received the story from some medieval source, which created it

to defend the relevant provisions of the *Arabic Canons*. Whatever the case may be, the story cannot be a current account of the history behind the Seleucian catholicate. In fact, it has many problems, which the present writer has noted in some of his other publications.[19] We reject it in favour of what we can learn from ancient records of the Persian Church that have come down to us.

We should be reminded here of the fact that none of these documents were available for use to Mar Dionysius VI or to any of the historians who discuss the history of the Church of Malabar in modern times, so that they were relying chiefly on the work of Bar Ebraya. It is, in fact, the story preserved by this Syrian author that they all have believed to be the truth of the matter, and it came to be included in good faith in Sunday School text books and other publications meant for popular education.[20]

Though the Church spread in Persia independent of the Church in the Roman empire, the two sections had friendly relations with each other, whenever it was possible, till the 5th century. During the early decade of that century Persia was ruled by Yizdegerd I, who was a peace-loving man. He established cordial contacts with the Roman empire and received ambassadors from the emperor of Constantinople. One of them was bishop Marutha of Miapherket in the Syrian regions of that empire, who came to Seleucia in 409 and again in 410. He helped the Persian Church to establish a working relation with the ruler of the country. But this service of the good bishop led soon to complications, which the Church of Persia solved.

The Church in the Syrian regions of the Roman empire, as we have noted, had Syriac as its language. As it was the same language in a different form that the Persian Church also had in use,[21] communication was possible between the two areas. The fact should also be recalled that till about the second half of the 5th century, the Church of Persia had no school of its own in the land of Persia to train its clergy. This Church had been utilizing the services of a school at Edessa in the Roman empire, which existed on the border between the two empires.

In the 5th century the Persian Church came to be very definitely on its own. The way in which this Church asserted itself as an independent Church deserves our attention. The catholicate of Seleucia and the Persian Church as a whole had to pass through a terribly

agonizing period of persecution during the 4th century, when Sapor II (309-379) was the emperor. From 339 he unleashed a reign of terror against Christians and successfully waged a series of military engagements with the areas of the Roman empire that lay beyond the western borders of Persia. But the situation changed after the death of Sapor, and peace was established between the empires early in the 5th century. It was during this time that bishop Marutha came to Persia as the ambassador of the emperor of Constantinople.[22] When communication thus became possible, the Church in the Syrian regions, as the major and organized community, entertained the plan of trying to influence the Persian Church to conform to its ways of ecclesiastical life and traditions. Efforts in this direction were made by some bishops from the area who visited Persia between 410 and 420 A.D. The issue raised by them, it should be remembered, was not to make the Church of Persia come under the jurisdiction of Antioch. The thought of bringing the Persian Church within the authority of Antioch had not occurred to the people concerned till much later in time. In fact, it is to what happened to this effect, possibly from the 9th century, that Bar Ebraya refers in his writings as of earlier periods.[23]

To be sure, faced with the threat of losing its identity, the Church of Persia adopted a definite stand. In a council with thirty bishops, which met in 424 A.D., it made a resolution that the catholicos of Seleucia alone was its patriarch, and that it would not tolerate any interference in its life from outside. This incident is of great importance for the Church of Persia. It shows clearly that the catholicos in Persian Church history was the same dignitary as patriarch in the Church of the Roman empire. The Persian Church, as we have seen, was faced with the need of a leader who would represent it as a whole within its life situation in its country. The dignitary so recognized was indeed the catholicos. Thus catholicos and patriarch occupy the same rank in the Church's hierarchy, the latter in the Church of the Roman empire and the former in Persia.

The Church of Persia made another decision sixty-two years later, which affected its future ever since and which caused a rift between it and the Church elsewhere. In fact, it was a necessity for its survival in Persia, where political authorities suspected Christians of being primarily loyal to the Christian empire of Constantinople, to evolve a form of Church life and faith different from those of the Church in the

western empire. The ground for this evolution had been prepared almost from about 435 A.D., when the supporters of Nestorius against his deposition by the council of Ephesus in 431 had taken over into their control the school of Edessa.[24] Founded possibly in the 4th century, this school had served the Church both in the eastern regions of Syria which formed part of the Roman empire and the Church of Persia. But from 435 its teaching and administration were in the hands of men who honoured Nestorius. Till about 470 A.D. this school trained a large number of clergymen for the Persian Church, and in the seventies of the century this Church founded a school at Nisibis in Persia itself. In this way students from Persia were taught in the 'Nestorian' way, and many of them occupied high positions in the Church. In 485 A.D. one of these men who had been educated at Nisibis was made catholicos of Seleucia. He was Acacius, who convened a council of the Persian Church in 486 which adopted a doctrinal decision favouring the position of Nestorius.[25] As a matter of fact, during the seventies of the century, metropolitan Bar Sauma of Nisibis had been carrying on a consistent programme towards the achievement of this goal. The decision of 486 did in effect call in question the soundness of the theological basis of the council of Ephesus for condemning Nestorius in 431, and resolved to recognize him and those who agreed with him as theologians and church fathers.

We should be reminded here that the Church of Persia was not accepting the theology of Nestorius as its doctrinal standpoint. What it did, on the other hand, was to examine the basis of his condemnation in the light of its tradition and say that he did not deserve condemnation. On this ground, the council of 486 resolved to include him and the teachers who adopted his standpoint in theology as fathers of the Church. In the face of this self-defence of the Persian Church, it is possible to comment that its tradition had itself been shaped at least from 435 within a 'Nestorian' milieu, so that the real issue for the Church to face is the theological justification of the condemnation of Nestorius by the council of Ephesus in 431.

b) An Antiochene Party in Persia

When the Persian Church adopted officially the position implied in the decision of 486, there was a small body of Christians in that country who refused to fall in line with it. They were so small in number in the beginning, most of them being captives from Syria whom

Sapor II had brought to the country in war with the area, that their existence made no substantial difference to the ecclesiastical situation in Persia.[26] But during the 6th century and the early decades of the 7th, this body was strengthened by the addition of fresh captives brought into the country in their wars by Persian emperors, Chosraw I and Chosraw II. From 629 A.D. this body came to have an organized existence under the catholicos or maphrian of Tagrith, whom we have noted above.

The Catholicos of the East, as he came to be called by Antiochene Syrians later, was originally raised to the position as the great metropolitan of the east by the Syrian patriarch, with whom he continued to be in communion. He had, as we have seen, a standing in the Persian Church of the Antiochene Syrian Christians, equal to that of the patriarch himself. Though he was not called patriarch, like the catholicos of Seleucia, in practice he was patriarch for his section of the Church in Persia. In order to avoid friction between the patriarch and the catholicos, the two dignitaries signed formal agreements guaranteeing the principle of non-interference of either of them in the affairs of the other. The bond of union consisted in one significant clause, which enjoined that when a patriarch died, the catholicos should participate in the ceremony for raising a successor, and correspondingly when a catholicos died, the patriarch should take the lead in appointing his successor. However, the patriarch had his primacy, which the catholicos was expected to honour.[27]

Thus in Persia taken as a whole, there were two Syrian ecclesiastical dignitaries, with the title catholicos. The first of them was the original catholicos of Seleucia, who assumed the name patriarch as well from 424 A.D. To begin with, he was the bishop of Seleucia. As the Church saw the need to nominate a leader to represent the community as a whole, he assumed the role and became declared the catholicos of Seleucia. Lateron, as we have seen,[28] Seleucia lost its importance as the capital of the empire and Baghdad took its place. The catholicos also now shifted his residence to the new capital. In the 13th century for the same reason, it was transferred to North Mesopotamia. He is the patriarch of Babylon who is known in the history of the Malankara Church, to whom in 1490 the Church of Kerala sent a three-man delegation asking him for bishops for the Indian Church.[29]

The second dignitary, the catholicos of Tagrith, continued to function for many centuries from the time of his elevation in the 7th century, but the office does not exist now. Some of the writers who deal with the story of the Tagrithan catholicate, try to make out that the office was established by 'the Orthodox party' in Persia to replace the ancient catholicos, who had accepted the Nestorian way, by a person who held the right faith. This claim is not made by Syrian authors like Bar Ebraya, who discuss the subject. Moreover the time gap between 486 and 629—one hundred and forty-three years—is sufficient evidence to argue against it. Equally noteworthy is the difference in the nature of authority wielded by the two dignitaries. The Seleucian catholicos emerged in consequence of an evolution within the Persian Church, in the same way as patriarchs came into being in the Roman empire. The Tagrithan catholicate or the maphrianate was the creation of the Antiochene Syrian patriarch to represent him in that part of the world, but the latter recognized the former as occupying an office equal in rank with his own.

There is an important point with reference to the Tagrithan catholicate, which should be noted in this context. The Syrian patriarch, Athanasius Gamolo, raised that dignitary in the 7th century. He had no difficulty in entering into an agreement with fellow Syrian Christians in the Persian regions and raise for them an ecclesiastical dignitary, who held the same authority in Persia, as he himself wielded in the Syrian regions of the Roman empire. But in the 19th and 20th centuries,the patriarchs in the same line of succession do not have the same vision with reference to the Indian Church, comprising people of a different race and culture from theirs. The disparity here is indeed glaring! The result is a division of the Christian community.

c) The Catholicate at Kottayam

The catholicate was established at Kottayam, as we have seen, in 1912. The first dignitary to be so raised, Mar Baselios Paulose, had his installation at the Niranam church. Following the event, patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah led the ceremony for the consecration of two metropolitans, Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos and Joachim Mar Ivanios. Mar Baselios was an old man, who died in about eight months of his elevation and was buried at Pampakuda.

A second catholicos was not raised soon. No reason for the delay has been officially given. It may well be that Mar Dionysius hoped

that an understanding between the patriarch and the party on his side could be reached if time was given them. It could also be that his attention was drawn to the case in court which by then had begun. However, the Mardin trip showed him that a settlement of the issue was not possible with the patriarch, and the judgment of the high court under justice Veera Raghava Iyenkar led him to realize that no court of law could be relied on. In any case, after his return from the foreign trip, the second catholicos was installed at Kottayam in April 1925.[30]

The new catholicos was Baselios Geevarghese I, who had been made a metropolitan in 1912. With Mar Dionysius and Joachim Mar Ivanios, he consecrated Father P. T. Geevarghese of Bethany as Mar Ivanios episcopa. This catholicos was rather short-lived. A man who had contracted a gastric abnormality for some time, he had an operation at Neyyur, which resulted in his death on 17 December 1928. His bodily remains were interred at Vallikad near Vakathanam.

The next catholicos was raised on 14 February 1929 at the Elia chapel, Kottayam, Mar Dionysius and Mar Ivanios of Bethany leading the ceremony. The latter was made a metropolitan at this time, along with Kuriakose Mar Gregorios of Pampady and Yakoob Mar Theophilos of Bethany.

Mar Baselios Geevarghese II had an eventful life. He led the Church as catholicos till his death in 1964. Soon after his elevation Mar Ivanios of Bethany, with Mar Theophilos, joined the Roman Catholic Church. Since Mar Ivanios was a person holding an M.A. degree, the Church was keen to have a substitute for him in someone who had a university degree at least equal to it. Providence favoured the community, and Father K. T. Geevarghese of Kizhakethalakal family, Puthencavu, could be found to take the place. A person holding the M. A. and the B. D. degrees, he was consecrated as Mar Philoxenos on 3 November 1930 at Parumala. Catholicos Mar Geevarghese II consecrated in all eight other metropolitans since then.[31] It was during his tenure of service that the case in court was revived in 1938 and the Supreme Court of India gave its verdict in favour of the catholicate in 1958. This was followed by a reunion of the parties in the Church, with the definite approval of the then patriarch Mar Jacob III. In the Indian scene the nation obtained its freedom and was declared a democratic republic in 1948. In the world scene

His Holiness Baselios Geevarghese I
Catholicos of the East
(1925—1928)

the second world war was fought, to begin with between Britain and Germany, and the former and her allies scored a victory after a period of about seven years.

It was in September 1930 that Mar Ivanios of Bethany joined the Roman Catholic Church and was appointed as the archbishop of Trivandrum by Rome. This event is looked upon with immense satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment by those belonging to the Church of Rome, but the Orthodox community does not share that view. Whatever that may be, one thing is certain. The title 'metropolitan' which Mar Ivanios was able to secure in the Orthodox Church and the conversion with him of Mar Theophilos helped him to obtain distinction in the Church of his adoption as an archbishop.[32] Mar Ivanios was responsible for the founding of the Antiochene or the West Syrian rite in the Roman Church known as the Syro-Malankara rite. The body which remained with that Church from the 17th century known as the Syro-Malabar rite follow the East Syrian rite.[33] As a result of Mar Ivanios' defection the old Syrian Church, the Church of St. Thomas, of Kerala experienced another division. It now came to exist in eight communities.[34]

Catholicos Mar Geevarghese II died in 1964 and was buried at the Catholicate Aramana, Kottayam. Now in the light of the regulation binding the patriarch and the catholicos of Tagrith, which the *Hudaya* enjoins, patriarch Mar Yakoob III was formally invited to lead the installation ceremony of the next catholicos, Mar Baselios Augen I. He responded favourably, and thereby the peace which had been established in 1958 was confirmed and ratified. But in opposition to what people in general thought, 1964 gave the patriarch an opportunity for trying to restore his claims in a new way.

The peace in the Church brought about in 1958 and confirmed in 1964 could not be lasting. There was an unbridged fundamental gap in understanding between the patriarch and the Church of Malabar, regarding their mutual relations. The position of the latter is clear; it is that the provision contained in the *Hudaya* 7:1 (the end of the section) should be its basis. Bar Ebraya incorporates there eight resolutions adopted by a synod of bishops of the Antiochene Syrian Church, which met at a place called Kepharthutha in 869 A.D.,under the presidency of the Syrian patriarch Yuhanon (846-873). Four of

those resolutions are particularly relevant to our situation. They are:- *The second:* The patriarch shall not involve himself administratively in the dioceses of Tagrith, without being formally invited to do so; neither shall the maphrian enter in the administration of the dioceses that belong to the patriarch. *The third:* When the maphrian is present with the patriarch, the former shall have his seat at the latter's right side next to him; the maphrian's name shall be proclaimed immediately after that of the patriarch. *The fourth:* While the maphrian is alive. no patriarch shall be appointed without his formal knowledge. If this is done, the easterners shall have the right to appoint the maphrian on their own. When the patriarch is installed, the question as to who should lay hands on the candidate concerned, the maphrian or the president of the synod, shall be decided by a committee of four persons, two from the east and two from the west.[35] *The eight:* A bishop kept under suspension by the maphrian shall be under suspension by the patriarch as well.

These four regulations are clear enough. They establish a basis for relations between the patriarch and the Church of Malabar, a basis that respects the integrity of both parties and excludes the possibility of friction between them. Apparently, the patriarch is not willing to abide by these regulations. Judging from his actions so far, the patriarch is keen to conserve the right to consecrate bishops and sanctify *mooron,* or the holy oil, exclusively to himself. Though in some cases he may authorize someone else to perform the ceremony on his behalf, the authority to fulfil the same is his alone. He may be pleased at times to permit the catholicos himself to carry out the consecrations, but that is not statutory. In other words, the catholicos has no authority in himself, beyond what a metropolitan has, and the Church of Malabar shall continue to be ever dependent upon the goodwill of the patriarch for its functioning. The patriarch is not, to be sure, agreeable to acknowledge the Indian Church's right to self-determination. Like the Mardin trip of Mar Dionysius VI in 1923, the peace experiment following the supreme court decision of 1958 also ended in failure.

In 1964, when patriarch Jacob III cooperated with the Church of Malabar in the ceremony of installing Mar Baselios Augen as catholicos he was under no illusions. As he was sure of a party in the Church to support him at any cost, he was obviously taking a chance to see

His Holiness Baselios Geevarghese II
Catholicos of the East
(1929—1964)

whether the whole Church could be persuaded in a subtle way to accept his supremacy.[36] The different ways in which he directed his activities to achieve this goal is beyond the scope of this work. We need point out only that failing in his effort with reference to the whole Church, Mar Jacob III came out openly to organize the party loyal to him. In this programme he was indeed successful, for the community was already ideologically divided, a situation that can be traced back to earlier times.[37]

Catholicos Mar Baselios Augen I retired from office in October 1975, and catholicos Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I was installed to succeed him on 27 October 1975. While he was still in office, Mar Augen was served with a letter by patriarch Jacob III in January 1975, making out that he was being suspended from the dignity. Then in October, after he had retired, another letter was added announcing that the catholicos and all those who adhered to him were formally excommunicated. By both these despatches Mar Jacob III showed himself to be no better than his predecessors, Mar Peter III, Mar Abdullah II and Mar Elias III. In 1911 patriarch Mar Abdullah said more than once that unless Mar Dionysius VI submitted to his demands, the Church of Malabar would never see peace.[38] The prophecy was now fulfilled!

During the eleven years of his leadership Mar Augen guided the Church in its memorable growth and progress. In January 1965 he led a delegation to the conference of the Heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches which met in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia.[39] He led the ceremony for the consecration of three metropolitans, and he being indisposed under his guidance five others were also raised to the episcopal rank at a ceremony led by the catholicos designate Mar Athanasius. Thus when he passed from this life on December 8, 1975, the Orthodox Church had the catholicos and eleven metropolitans.

The present catholicos, Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I, was raised to the office by the episcopal synod on 27 October 1975. In the course of the more than ten years of his leadership, the Church has had an all-round growth. In addition to the five metropolitans whose consecration he performed during the life time of his predecessor, he consecrated ten others to the episcopal rank. The Orthodox Church, in spite of the many problems facing it, is now a vigorous community, dynamic and forward looking. All these developments have been

made possible by the devoted services of a large number of its sons and daughters, who have worked on the foundation laid by Mar Dionysius VI.

5) Nature of the Catholicate at Kottayam

It has been shown above,[40] that the point concerning the transfer of the catholicate from Tagrith to Kottayam is not to press a physical shifting, but to emphasize that it is the same office as that of the Tagrithan catholicate. The metropolitan may have hoped in good faith that it should also have the same relation to the patriarch as that the catholicos of Tagrith had, so long as the latter functioned. This hope of Mar Dionysius VI has now come to be impossible to hold on to any longer. For one thing, the patriarchs have all along been refusing to admit it, without clarifying why they adopt that stand. We are led therefore to say that their concern for the Church of Malabar is limited to the possibility of their dominating it and thereby obtaining whatever benefit they can get from it. The Church of Malabar, on its part, is unable to see any reason why a basis other than what is noted in the book of *Hudaya* should be adopted to guide its relation with the patriarch.

The catholicate at Kottayam is, to be sure, the office which holds the authority of a general supervision in the Malankara Church and its branches abroad. We have already seen that the catholicos is the incumbent of a rank in the Church's hierarchy who, like the patriarch, wields this right. What is meant here should be differentiated from the information we have of the catholicos in our earlier history. Two Syrian prelates bearing this title have visited Kerala during the 17th and 18th centuries. The first of them, Mar Baselios Yaldo,[41] is said to have arrived in Malabar in 1685. He died within a fortnight of his landing in the country and was buried at Kothamangalam. Practically nothing is known of him, but a feast in his memory is held at the Kothamangalam church which attracts large crowds of people every year. The other person was Mar Baselios Sakralla who came in 1751 and lived in Kerala till 1764.[42] Following his death, this prelate was buried at the church of Kandanad. Neither of them represented Tagrith. We have recorded evidence that Mar Sakralla was specially chosen by patriarch Geevarghese and elevated to the rank of catholicos, in order to be sent to India as his accredited deputy with a view to confirming the episcopal title of Mar Thoma V. Thus Baselios

His Holiness Baselios Augen I
Catholicos of the East
(1964—1975)

Sakralla was an envoy of the patriarch, a position which Baselios Yaldo also may have held. The story of these prelates shows that by their time the Church presided over by Tagrith had become so weak that it had lost its ancient prestige. By then the patriarch had begun to engage him as his deputy. This certainly is not the status of the catholicos who presides over the Church of Malabar.

Another precedent is possible to be noted from the history of the Malankara Syrian Church. In 1902 A.D. Joseph Mar Dionysius, the metropolitan who opposed the reform movement and scored a lasting victory in court against its leaders, celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination to priesthood. The Church felicitated the metropolitan in great pomp and ceremony on the occasion, and it was proposed that he should be honoured in a special way. Mathen malpan of Konat now took the initiative in holding correspondence with the patriarch with a view to obtaining the elevation of the metropolitan to the rank of a catholicos. Though the malpan did his work well enough, the response from the patriarch in Mardin was negative and the idea had to be dropped. It is no wonder that Z. M. Paret describes the incident in his characteristically sarcastic way.[43]

It should be observed here that the plan of Mathen malpan and possibly others like him was to honour a hero and experience from it a momentary joy thereby. This again is not what the catholicate at Kottayam is meant to achieve. Mar Dionysius VI saw the issue in its proper setting, as he had a deep concern for the Church and its integrity. He loved the Church and submitted himself to suffer for it. The result is the catholicate at Kottayam.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mar Dionysius VI, the Man

An ascetic by temperament who cared little for external show, Dionysius VI had developed his inner life in a remarkable way by prayer and spiritual discipline. The result was that he had on the one hand clarity of mind and nobility of character, and on the other devotion to duty and courage of conviction. Thus he had the inner strength to follow a course in life boldly till the end. Unlike many others who choose the ministry of the Church as a profession, he opted it as a vocation. To be sure, he had learned from Mar Dionysius V, his illustrious predecessor, that the Malankara Syrian Church deserved whole-hearted love and service from its adherents, and he on his part dedicated himself early in life to contribute his mite towards its progress.

It was, as we have seen, in 1909 that the Malankara Association under the presidency of Dionysius V chose Vattaseril Geevarghese remban and Kochuparambil Paulose remban to be made metropolitans and sent them to the patriarch for their consecration. Before the two men set out on their journey to Jerusalem, the old metropolitan advised them both very earnestly that on no account they should submit to the patriarch any formal undertaking beyond what was there in the order of service for the ceremony.[1] Both of them followed the advice and came back to India as metropolitans. But soon the patriarch arrived in Kerala and demanded of them registered deeds acknowledging his absolute authority in the Church. Though Paulose Mar Kurillos yielded, Mar Dionysius refused to comply, and the patriarch excommunicated him.[2]

In the two foregoing chapters we have seen Mar Dionysius VI as an able Church leader who accomplished something significant for the Church of Malabar. In the present chapter we shall try to see him as a person. Two things about Mar Dionysius VI have caused to conceal his greatness as a spiritual leader even from many who had in fact admired him in other respects. In the first place, his opponents

have consistently decried him and their efforts have cast a shadow on his person. They have tried to make out that Mar Dionysius VI was a man of authoritarian leanings who dragged the Church of Malabar into an unfortunate division, with a view to dominating it himself. Secondly, his involvement in court cases during a large part of his episcopal career led many to think of him as an expert in litigation rather than in spiritual matters. As a matter of fact, both these are thoroughly distorted impressions of the man. As regards the first point, the fact is that Mar Dionysius VI had a conception of the nature of the Church, which he had learned from history and Antiochene Syrian sources, and which he endeavoured to conserve against the claims of the patriarch for the good of the Church of Malabar, not for his own personal advantage. As regards court cases, it is a fact that Mar Dionysius never took the first step and he did not carry them forward for his personal benefit. To be sure, he was drawn to the court, but he discharged his duty in conducting the cases and establishing the rights of the Church of Malabar. The Church should feel ever grateful to him for the sacrifice which underwent to achieve the goal.

Father Jacob Manalil who had known the metropolitan very intimately and served him as his private secretary for nine years, from 1925 to 1934, notes a number of great qualities in him.[3] Among them, the following four, namely Nobility of character, Self-control, Unwavering love for the Church and A whole-hearted concern for the Church's unity, deserve special notice.

a) **Nobility of Character**

From 1913 to about 1930 Mar Dionysius VI was drawn into at least six court cases, both civil and criminal. It is in fact his victory in them that won for the catholicate at Kottayam its legal standing. But in obtaining it, the metropolitan had to undergo very real struggle, both physical and mental. That he was able, with grace from above, to brave them all is the simple truth about the man which any one should sincerely appreciate.

As regards the court cases in which Mar Dionysius VI had to be engaged, question is possible to be raised as to how far he stood by the principle of honesty and truthfulness. In fact, on 5 October 1928 the lawyer who examined him in the Suspension case asked him: "Have you committed deliberate acts of sins?" "It is my conviction",

answered the metropolitan, "that I have not wilfully indulged in acts of sin which may be described as beyond the possibility of forgiveness". That he had failures of his own, he admitted; but as he used to feel sorry for them, he was confident that God has forgiven him those violations.[4] We have record that the question was raised to him directly by a close friend in a private conversation. He was asked whether in the series of examinations which he had to undergo in courts of law he had ever strayed from the path of truth. The answer which Mar Dionysius gave on that occasion is more noteworthy than the statements which he made in court. He said to the friend that, so far as his conscience went, he had never deviated from what he knew to be the truth concerning issues raised to him.[5] The metropolitan maintained the confidence that in answering questions put to him in court he had kept to the principle of truth.

Did he not tell a lie in court referring to his consecration as metropolitan? This question has a story behind it, which has been told rather widely and many have noted it as evidence that Mar Dionysius VI would not mind distorting facts if thereby he could gain a point. The story is this. On 31 August 1918 Mar Dionysius was asked by the lawyer, "When you were consecrated, was it not patriarch Abdullah that laid hands on your head?" "It is my unwavering faith", he answered, "that the person who laid hands directly was patriarch Abdullah". "Is it only that you so believe, and not that you are sure?" "I did not say that I was not sure, but only that I could not see".

The issue in question should be noted. During the consecration there is an occasion when the person who leads the ceremony takes the candidate within his vestments and, while the head of the latter is covered, the former waves his hands and lays them on his head three times. Normally the candidate would not be able to see with his eyes what was going on, except that he could have an awareness of the same. In his answer to the lawyer's question Mar Dionysius was trying to make a point, without giving the former any possibility of arguing the case against him. His opponents were seeking to establish that it was the patriarch by himself who consecrated a metropolitan, so that the latter should obey the former implicitly. Since Mar Dionysius was excommunicated by the patriarch who had raised him to the episcopate, they argued, he had no right to challenge the action. The lawyer was seeking to make out this point against the metropolitan. Mar

Dionysius, on the other hand, insisted that a person was consecrated as a bishop, not by the patriarch by himself, but by a council of bishops.[6] In excommunicating him also, the relevant council should arrive at the decision to that effect, following a legally defensible examination. Both in the consecration and in the excommunication the role of the patriarch was only to serve as the leader of the council. In his case, argued the metropolitan, the consecration had been performed by a council of bishops presided over by patriarch Abdullah, but the excommunication had been perpetrated by the patriarch alone, so that the latter action of the patriarch was opposed to the tradition and canon laws of the Antiochene Syrian Church itself. Therefore, in proceeding to excommunicate him, the patriarch exceeded his authority as it is conserved in his own Church. To establish this principle was the aim of Mar Dionysius. What we can see in the incident of 31 August 1918 is not therefore that the metropolitan would indulge in falsehood if that would serve his purpose. To see it in that way is to misunderstand the incident altogether.[7]

Mar Dionysius VI was intelligent enough to answer questions put to him by lawyers, without falling into their trap. But in so doing, he did not violate the nobility of his character. A clear example of this fact can be noted by referring to an incident which happened during his examination in court. In the letter of excommunication patriarch Abdullah had noted that the metropolitan had the physical infirmity of shivering of hands, so that it would not be possible for him to celebrate the holy Qurbana properly and distribute the elements according to canonical stipulation.[8] The metropolitan admitted that he had in fact the shivering of hands, but maintained that it did not affect his celebrating the sacrament and giving the consecrated elements in the prescribed way. "Does not the canon law insist", the lawyer asked, "that deacons and priests should be given communion in a spoon?" "Yes", answered the metropolitan. "This is how we do". The lawyer now asked, I shall give you water in a cup with a spoon and a saucer. Would you take the cup and the saucer and walk twenty feet from where you are seated? "I have come to the court", said Mar Dionysius, "to depose in a case as a witness, not to dramatically perform what is being done during the celebration of the Qurbana. To do that is an insult to me, and I am not willing to comply with your request".[9] The incident brings out the quality of Mar Dionysius as a man, and how he answered questions which were put to him in court.

On hearing the news of Mar Dionysius' death in 1934, justice G. Sankara Pillai, who had served as the special judge between 1913 and 1919 and who was then appointed as a judge of the high court of Travancore, wrote a letter of condolence to the catholicos at Kottayam. Justice Sankara Pillai, it should be noted, had come to know Mar Dionysius only from his depositions in court, from which he had formed an opinion of the man. The following extract from that letter will show the kind of impression the metropolitan had made on a Hindu judge of unblamable character and reputation for moral grandeur.

> ..... He (Mar Dionysius) stood straight and fought for the preservation of a principle of central siginificance for the Church of Malabar. For this reason, he was subjected to false accusations and persecutions in various ways. He had to undergo suffering of a serious personal nature. But he endured them all as a dedicated warrior, with courage and devotion that become a real Christian.[10]

Father Jacob Manalil's testimony to the nobility of Mar Dionysius' character includes a number of points deserving our attention. Three of them may be noted here.

i) *The metropolitan harboured no ill-will* or spirit of vindictiveness towards anyone. When he won the case in court, he was not over-joyed, neither was he dejected when he lost it. In all situations he looked up to God in the depth of his heart and received strength and courage from the Lord of all things. This is not to say that the spirit of despondency did never trouble him, but that whenever he was affected by it he could overcome it in the power from above.

In this connection a word about his habit of prayer should be mentioned. Mar Dionysius was a man of prayer, but he was keen that no one knew that great secret of his life. In addition to the canonical prayers and the common worship in the Church, he had his time of private prayer and meditation every day. For him, a life of prayer and personal religious discipline were not for others to see, but for the person concerned to experience between himself and God. The secret communion that he constantly kept up with the eternal sustained him through stress and strain throughout his life. However, only those who moved with him closely knew about it.

ii) *Mar Dionysius showed no partiality* towards those belonging to his party at the cost of those of the opposite side. He did not look upon any one as his enemy. An incident which brings out the remarkable magnanimity evinced by him in his relation to a priest of the patriarch's party, who did in fact seek to damage him, is narrated by Father Jacob.[11] In 1929 when, as we have noted,[12] Mar Dionysius was visiting a church in the diocese of Kandanad, this incident happened. The church was served by five priests, one of whom was against Mar Dionysius. That priest organized a gang of his supporters, who assaulted one of the men who worked for Mar Dionysius, and seriously injured him physically, after the metropolitan had left the place. A criminal case was filed in court and the culprits were punished. Seeing the turn of events, the priest wrote a letter of apology to Mar Dionysius, who forgave the man even against the advice of those close to him.[13] The metropolitan did not only pardon the priest and his men, but also pay the medical bill of the injured man.

iii) *The metropolitan's management of finances was exemplary* Mar Dionysius kept strict accounts of all his incomes and expenses. In fact, all his personal incomes he counted as belonging to the Church. Living as he did a frugal life, his expenses were minimal. When he visited churches, he saw to it that he did not receive their hospitality beyond the barest minimum. Anything else that he or those who were with him needed was met by him from his personal resources Before the time came for him to depart from this world, he had his Will prepared bequeathing all the properties in his possession to the Church.[14]

b) **Self-Control**

Mar Dionysius, as we have seen, had a vision for the Church of Malabar. However, though he had supporters, he also had opponents who would not let him proceed in his plan unhindered. This situation called for absolute self-control on the part of Mar Dionysius if he were to promote the idea that had gripped him.

Three occasions in his life when he was called to face serious crises should be noted. The first was when he received the letter of excommunication from patriarch Mar Abdullah. As we have noted,[15] though the patriarch was residing in the old seminary where in a separate room the metropolitan also had his residence, the letter had been

despatched by registered post from Alleppey, in order to reach him without anybody else in the area possibly knowing of it. By that time the patriarch had built up a body of strong supporters who would stand by him against the metropolitan. The plan was to isolate Mar Dionysius from his brother metropolitan Paulose Mar Kurillos and his co-trustees. From that time on, for some time, life was extremely miserable for him at the seminary. He had to live in a room surrounded by ruffians whose only job was to abuse and threaten him that they would do away with him. A body guard whom his supporters had stationed to protect him from them was mercilessly murdered. The mental agony at being isolated on the one hand, and the physical strain brought on him by the environment on the other, must have been too unbearable for him. But he faced them all without any murmur.

A second occasion was when Mar Dionysius came to know of the Iyenkar verdict of 1923.[16] Humanly speaking, he must have experienced then the deepest anguish and shock in his whole life. The fact should be recalled that between 1913 and 1923 he had success in all court cases. The judgment of the Cochin high court and that of G. Sankara Pillai in the Trivandrum district court had clearly vindicated his stand. But the Iyenkar judgment was a total reversal of all that had gone before,including the verdict of the royal court of appeal in 1889. The way Mar Dionysius reacted to the news is what we should note in the present context. We have an eye-witness account of the incident in the essay of Father Jacob Manalil. He says that the news reached Mar Dionysius in the evening of 23 March 1923,[17] when he had just started his evening meal. Two lay leaders from Kottayam came to the seminary with a telegraphic message, containing a gist of the judgment. Though the two men could not control their feelings, the metropolitan who should be more disturbed than anybody else was absolutely composed. He finished the meal in his usual way and had the telegram read a second time. Instead of having to be consoled, he quietly listened to every word. Then he explained the verdict and its implications to those who were there.

The third occasion consisted of the two periods during the years 1918 and 1928, when the lawyers examined him in the original Church case and in the suspension case respectively. In the first, which began as an inter-pleader suit in 1913, Mar Dionysius was tried from 4 July to 29 October 1918, for a period of about four months, and in the

second he was examined from 8 September to 19 November 1928, for over two months. On neither of these occasions, the lawyers arguing the case against the metropolitan were prepared to spare him the least clemency. Their one object was somehow to make him admit that he had committed an ecclesiastical offence,and on the that basis to argue that the metropolitan deserved the excommunication, and that therefore the catholicate was not possible to be defended in the light of law. The lawyers, as it is well known, were heavily paid *per diem* by their clients, so that it was in their interests, on the one hand, to prolong the examination, and on the other to vex Mar Dionysius in all possible ways, thereby to obtain applause from his opponents. Thus both the occasions were terrible ordeals for the metropolitan. Yet he met the situations with admirable courage and a remarkable presence of mind.

What is to be noted about these experiences is that Mar Dionysius took them upon himself for the Church of Malabar. From his point of view, the demand of the patriarch was a denial of the basic rights of a people, so that it should not be admitted. In fact, he stated in court that the Church of Malabar with its three to four lakhs of people and its association should not be treated as the slaves of the patriarch, so that he might impose his selfish plans on them.[18] This reflects the mind of the man. He suffered the agony in order to ensure the Church of Malabar its innate freedom.

c) **Love for the Church**

To say that Mar Dionysius loved his Church is not to say much. The question is, What was the nature of the love which he had? In the two previous chapters we have seen that Mar Dionysius had a vision of the Church in agreement with the tradition as it had been evolved in the Antiochene Syrian Church. That tradition, we have shown, consisted of two focii. On the one hand, it is a continuation of a structure of ecclesiastical hierarchy which was evolved in the Church as a whole during the early centuries, and on the other the place which the patriarch asserted in it from late 7th century. Though Mar Dionysius does not show an awareness of the latter fact, he is clear that 'patriacrch' as a rank in the hierarchy does not form part of the early tradition. As a result of its formation, the Church in different regions came to lose the internal freedom which it till then had been enjoying. Yet, the fact is that the Church did not venture to enhance the principle of centralizazation to the extent of elevating the rank of the patriarch or its equivalent as a fourth order in the Church's ministry.[19]

From 1665, when the Church of Malabar came in contact with the Antiochene Syrian Church, it had no understanding of the way the latter had developed its traditions over the centuries. In fact, we may not be wrong in saying that Mar Dionysius VI was a pioneer in taking up a study of them, using the documents available to him. Consequently, he came to realize that the Church of Malabar, with its long history in South India, should develop the two focii on its own. However, the limitations which he had[20] did not leave him free to go all the way in this pursuit, so that he had no plan whatsoever to break of the Church's relations with the Antiochene Syrian patriarch.

To develop the two focii the Malankara Syrian Church stood in need of an episcopal synod and a patriarch or the equivalent dignitary in a catholicos. By the reading of the works of Gregorios Bar Ebraya, Mar Dionysius learned that, for the correct way of raising a person to the episocopal rank according to the tradition of the Antiochene Syrian Church – as well as of every other historic Church in the world– an episcopal synod should be there to perform the ceremony, after the candidate had been duly elected by the clergy and people, in Malabar by the Malankara Association. Thus the clergy and people, or the association, elects, and the council of bishops consecrates; this to be sure is the procedure. Mar Dionysius was conversant with the statement of Bar Ebraya in his book of theological summary, the *Zalga,* to the effect that.

> A patriarch does not have the authority by himself either to consecrate or to excommunicate a bishop; neither does a bishop have the authority by himself to install or to depose a patriarch.

The statement is clear. The genuine Antiochene Syrian tradition expressed by this Syrian Church father insists that the consecration or deposition of a bishop should be carried out by the episcopal synod of the province concerned, following proper election of the candidate concerned, or the examination of the accused, as the case may be.

In the light of the tradition evolved from the 4th century, the episcopal synod should have its leader, to begin with in a metropolitan and later in a patriarch or a catholicos. Since, as we have seen,[21] from the 7th century the Antiochene Syrian Church recognized only the patriarch or the catholicos to be entitled to occupy the leadership of an episcopal synod, the Church of Malabar should have its patriarch

or catholicos if a synod were to function in it. Mar Dionysius saw the principle underlying this need.[22] Yet he was realistic. The establishment of an institution with the title 'patriarchate' had problems, which would not have been easy to be solved then. Though he knew that catholicos was equal to the patriarch, he did not press that point either. Conversant as he was with the Antiochene Syrian tradition, he stood closely by it. Thus with the cooperation of patriarch Abdul Messiah, he led the movement for the establishment of the catholicate. In this way the Malankara Syrian Church gained its individuality and selfhood, as an autocephalous[23] Church. It is to help this movement that Mar Dionysius VI worked, and he was ready to sacrifice anything within his power for its achievement.

In this context we have to face a serious question, which has in fact troubled many thinking people both in the Malankara Syrian Church and outside. Was not Mar Dionysius VI reacting against the excommunication pronounced by patriarch Mar Abdullah? If that is the case, was not the metropolitan led by a spirit of vengeance rather than by principle? Granting the complexity of the context in which the catholicate was established in 1912 and maintained since then, we have to say two things in answer to the question.

One, *Mar Dionysius VI could easily have forestalled the excommunication,* had he not been led by a principle. He was, as we have seen, an Antiochene Syrian in his upbringing and theological conviction. As Paulose Mar Kurillos or the two episcopal candidates—Paulose remban of Alwaye or Geevarghese remban of the Canaanite community had done, he could also have submitted a registered deed of some sort and be reconciled with the patriarch. In fact, Mar Abdullah had moved with caution to see that Mar Dionysius also would make his submission,[24] and would even have felt satisfied with some statement to save his face. Had the metropolitan done it in fact, the Church of Malabar would have continued as a group of dioceses under the jurisdictional control of the West Syrian patriarch.

Mar Dionysius realized that in the light of the Antiochene Syrian ecclesiastical tradition, the demand of patriarch Abdullah—and for that matter of patriarch Peter III as well—was indefensible, and that relying on the power of God, the Lord of the Church, he should challenge it. Therefore, however complex the context in which the

catholicate was established at Kottayam may have been, Mar Dionysius had a point to conserve by it for the Church of Malabar. Conversely, those who opposed him by siding with the patriarch did not show that they were fighting a legitimate battle. The co-trustees, for instance, strengthened the patriarch, but neither of them clarified what they wanted to gain for the Church by their action. Of the two trustees, Konat malpan was not against the establishment of the catholicate for the Malankara Syrian Church. Though his effort to elevate Mar Dionysius V to the rank of a catholicos may not have meant more than offering a temporary elation to the old metropolitan, as well as to himself and others concerned,[25] the fact that towards the end of his life he put in his weight for the recognition of the catholicate by the patriarch does speak to his credit,[26] but it does not bring out why he opposed the institution till then. As regards C.J. Kurien, the other trustee, while admitting that he was a man of name and fame, as to where his love for the Church lay is not clear. Is it that he wanted to control the Church and that the metropolitan stood against him, so that he wanted only to destroy it?

Two, *The establishment of the catholicate was the realizing of a dream* that goes back to the famous Oath of the Coonen Cross of 1653. It certainly was not a tit for a tat. With its long history that can be traced to its founding by Apostle Thomas, the Indian Church had its freedom in administration and life till the 16th century, though it had to rely on the Church of Persia for its episcopal ministrations. Then the Portuguese and the Antiochene Syrians sought in turn to convert it to the communion of the Church of Rome and the Syrian Church of Antioch respectively. It is from a state of Portuguese domination that the Oath of the Coonen Cross sought to liberate the Church of Malabar,with a view to gaining its own identity. Now Mar Dionysius was endeavouring to obtain for it the right to self-determination in relation to the Antiochene Syrian patriarch, through the catholicate. The Church should have had it centuries ago. Equally noteworthy is the fact that it is an ecclesiastical institution of immense possibilities for the future, not only of the Church of Malabar, but also for the Indian Church as a whole. We can, as a matter of fact, feel gratified that the Lord of the Church guided it through the many vicissitudes through which it had to pass over the centuries to reach this state. To say therefore that Mar Dionysius VI loved the Church

means that he had a vision for it and showed himself ready to work in a spirit of self-sacrifice till the vision was actualized.

Father Jacob Manalil makes an important point in exemplifying Mar Dionysius' love for the Church by referring to the defection of Mar Ivanios to the Church of Rome in 1930, an incident which we have already noted.[27] Z. M. Paret has shown convincingly that the metropolitan of Bethany had been planning for some time to embrace the Roman Catholic Church, and that it was not a sudden decision on his part.[28] However, as Father Jacob points out, the junior metropolitan wanted to take the step only after the life-time of his *guru,* the senior metropolitan. It is quite natural for Mar Ivanios who had been so much indebted to Mar Dionysius to feel diffident to adopt a change in his life while the latter was alive. However, the matter leaked out and it reached the ears of the senior metropolitan. His reaction was sharp and abrupt, and he expressed it uncompromisingly. If Mar Ivanios had the plan to leave his Church and join the Church of Rome, let him do it immediately. Mar Dionysius' love for the Church was such that he did not want the man whom he loved very dearly, whom he built up with great expectations, to continue in it if he was not fully loyal to it.

Why did Mar Dionysius take up that attitude? The answer is simple. He was sure that if the metropolitan of Bethany made his departure while he was alive, he could see that the incident was not going to affect the Malankara Syrian Church too adversely, as he would be able to bring the matter under his control. If, on the other hand, Mar Ivanios with his personal magnetism left the Church after his life time, he would seek to bring serious damage to the Church of Malabar. It should be recalled that Mar Dionysius respected the Church of Rome. As he stated more than once during his examination in court, it was not necessary for his Church to condemn the Roman Catholic Church or vice versa.[29] In his view, they were two Churches, whose members should continue to be loyal to their respective communions. Till God brings them to unity, there was no need for members of either transfer their allegiance to the other, and create problems in social and family relations. On the other hand, as Churches they should respect each other and wish well for their services. As regards the action of Mar Ivanios, Mar Dionysius viewed it as the betrayal of a trust he had placed in the junior metropolitan, which could not be condoned. "The metran of Bethany deceived us", he said in a painful heart.[30]

d) **Concern for Peace in the Church**

Regarding Mar Dionysius' desire for peace in the Church also, we should be clear as to its nature. One thing is certain; he did not care for peace at any cost. He wanted only peace that would conserve truth and principle. If he was interested only in somehow keeping the community united, he would not have clashed with the patriarch. In his view, as it should be clear from the discussion so far, the Church of Malabar, as a Christian community with its own integrity, has its inherent rights. The community should be brought to unity by preserving them. The patriarch on his part should have the good sense to respect those rights, rather than ignore them.

From this point of view, Mar Dionysius did a number of things. An incident which happened soon after the excommunication, which came to be noted in the court case, should be considered relevant here. Though the metropolitan said once that if the patriarch excommunicated him, he would consider it a gold chain presented to him and wear it around his neck, when it actually came to pass he realized the enormity of the harm it would cause to the community. This thought led him in the early morning on one day to the room in the seminary where the patriarch was residing. Kneeling before the latter and holding to his feet, the metropolitan begged him in tears not to let the Church pass through a process of destruction. The patriarch responded by saying that if the metropolitan was willing to do what others had done, namely to submit to him the registered deed, he would reconsider his step. The answer of Mar Dionysius is worth reproducing here. He said, "My conscience does not permit me to do that. The Church has been committed to my care as a trust. How can I betray it? To do that is not possible at all for me".[31] The same point he made in his speech to the meeting of the Malankara Association on 14 July 1911.[32] The position noted here as elsewhere is clear. Mar Dionysius considered the Church as a community, in which those who have responsibility of administration hold their place only as guardians of a trust from God and from the community itself. That should not be thrown to the winds in order to please a patriarch or to patch up a union of conflicting elements in the community.

We have record that Mar Dionysius was keen to have a discussion of the subject of peace in the Church with the co-trustees, particularly with C. J. Kurien. Though he had expressed his desire in the matter

on several occasions, the initiative he took just before the announcement of the judgment of justice G. Sankara Pillai deserves special mention.[33] Mar Dionysius wrote a letter to Kurien requesting him to take up the matter of peace in the Church seriously and give an opportunity for a discussion of the subject, before any court decision was published. Kurien responded and there was a meeting of Kurien, his brother and E. J. John with the metropolitan, but it produced no positive result. We have no record of what transpired on that occasion. Father Jacob Manalil says that Kurien was not interested in the matter of peace at all.[34] When the issue was raised, he did only point to some excuse for postponing action. Thus, following the judgment of justice G. Sankara Pillai, he was keen to wait till the high court gave its verdict, but before that came he had left this world; the leaders on his side insisted that the metropolitan should surrender the properties of the Church as a condition for peace talks.

Mar Dionysius took the matter of the Church's unity and peace seriously, but he would not compromise on the principle that the Church of Malabar should on no account surrender its rights. What he did therefore was to express his willingness to resign for the sake of peace in the Church, if the community wanted him to do that. Mar Dionysius was not therefore trying to perpetuate the division in the Church in order that his place in it may be made secure. The Church of Malabar was for him an ecclesiastical unit with its own history and identity. No peace effort should be undertaken in violation of this fundamental truth about it.

There is one final word which we should not forget to say with reference to Mar Dionysius' concern for peace in the Church. His interest in the union of the two sections in the 'Jacobite' Church did not preclude him from keeping an open mind in regard to relation with other Churches. In fact, he was willing to have cooperation, though not immediate union, with other Churches in all possible ways, provided that it would not endanger the preservation of his Church's integrity. Three incidents may be noted to substantiate this statement.

One, The Syrian Students' Christian Conference which began in 1908 had missionaries of the Anglo-catholic wing of the Church of England as its leaders for many decades. How this arrangement came to be worked out is relevant in this context. K. C. Chacko, later one of

the founding members of the Union Christian College, Alwaye, was the honorary organizing secretary of the conference during its early years. A friend of Father V. J. Geevarghese, later Mar Dionysius VI, Chacko obtained the official sanction of the Church for the plan from Mar Dionysius V, the then Metropolitan of the Church. This was done, as a matter of fact, through Father V. J. Geevarghese.[35]

Two. In 1912 Mar Dionysius VI attended the conference of the World Student Christian Federation held at Serampore, under the leadership of the famous missionary, Dr. John R. Mott. The metropolitan's participation in that conference along with Father P. T. Geevarghese led to the Malankara Syrian Church's cooperation with the Serampore College in various ways, and with theological colleges like the Bishop's College, Calcutta. Consequently a large number of men belonging to the Malankara Syrian Church, particularly members of the Orthodox clergy, took advantage of this opportunity and were benefitted in obtaining theological education in those institutions. Besides, several members of the Orthodox Church have taught in them as well during the last several decades.

Three, As we have seen, during his examination in courts, both in 1918 and in 1928, Mar Dionysius expressed his views of other Churches, keeping closely to the spirit of ecumenism. However, he was careful never to violate the principle of loyalty to his own Church. Even in adopting the ecumenical spirit on such occasions, he found a clear basis in the Antiochene Syrian tradition itself in his support.

Some Final Observations

Mar Dionysius VI was a man who began his service of the Church as a faithful member of the Malankara Syrian Church, holding loyally to the faith and traditions of the Antiochene Syrian Church. He did not, as a matter of fact, undergo any radical change in this standpoint over the years. But as time passed, his studies led him to realize that, while keeping to the Antiochene connection, the Malankara Church had every right to claim administrative freedom for itself. His dealings with the Antiochene Syrian patriarch Mar Abdullah II confirmed him in this conviction, and he worked for the raising of a catholicos in the Church of Malabar. Though the first dignitary in that office died within a few months, no successor was appointed for over twelve years. His contacts with patriarch Mar Elias III strengthened his view further

that it would not be edifying for the Malankara Church to depend upon the Antiochene Syrian patriarch for its life and spiritual needs. This feeling led Mar Dionysius to allow the continuance of the catholicate, and it heads the Church ever since without a break.

Mar Dionysius VI who guided this movement was a learned man in his day. He had a grasp of what the Church was. People in the community had different views on the nature of the Church, but those had not been formed in the light of a study of the subject. Here Mar Dionysius could claim to be an exception. He, on the other hand, had formulated his views in a more or less systematic way. In fact, Father Jacob Manalil notes an incident in which he asked the metropolitan how he could be essentially consistent in his view as he had expressed them in the various law suits between 1913 and 1928.[36] The metropolitan answered, "The truths and principles which I have grasped by my innate understanding and study are deeply embedded in my mind, and I won't ever forget them".

To have such a man to confront patriarch Mar Abdullah, who came determined to follow up the foundation laid by Mar Peter III, and face the very powerful co-trustees, was indeed a blessing. The Malankara Syrian Church has had able leaders in administration, men of piety, or again persons who played remarkable roles in public life, but very few were there—if there were any at all who could claim to be men of learning in ecclesiastical discipline. Mar Dionysius was a man who, in his generation, could have in him a combination of all these qualities. A capable administrator, he was a man of genuine saintliness in life, a leader in public life, and a man of ecclesiastical learning. It is indeed a pity that his co-trustees did not have the patience to try to understand him, and that the Church of Malabar as a whole could not benefit by his paternal care and spiritual leadership.

Conclusion

In 1931, when patriarch Mar Elias III visited Kerala, Mar Dionysius, as we have noted,[1] called on him at Alwaye. It was, in fact, on that occasion that the patriarch openly announced his withdrawal of the metropolitan's interdict. In that connection there occurred a friendly exchange of words between the two dignitaries, which Advocate P.C. Kurien of Madras reports in an article.[2] The patriarch said, "You I accept, but not the catholicos whom you have created". Mar Dionysius retorted, "In that case, I do not accept Your Holiness, either". The conversation was carried on in a light mood, but subsequent history showed that the parties concerned stuck to what they said on this occasion. The patriarch lifted the excommunication in the probable hope of impressing on the viceroy at whose initiative the patriarch came to Malabar that he did what was necessary for the healing of division in the Malankara Syrian Church, but more in the possible expectation that the metropolitan and the Church of Malabar could be brought round to abandon the catholicate and unite with him on the basis of the Mulanthuruthy decision of 1876. But Mar Dionysius was not willing to give up the catholicate.

As regards the nature of the catholicate, it is clear that Mar Dionysius thought of it as an office equal in rank to the catholicate of Tagrith. In fact, the metropolitan does not adopt the view which some writers on the subject have tried to popularize. These authors maintain that in the catholicate of Tagrith the "Orthodox" party in Persia sought to replace the ancient catholicate of Seleucia, subsequent to the latter's defection to Nestorianism. This is a view which Syrian writers do not endorse, and Mar Dionysius stands in their tradition.[3]

The position of Mar Dionysius is in substance the one conserved officially in the Constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Church. It conceives of a "universal Syrian Orthodox Church" of which the patriarch is the head and the "Orthodox Syrian Church of the East"– referring to the Malankara Orthodox Church of which the catholicos is the head.[4] In rank the patriarch and the catholicos are equal, though the former should be counted as first in honour and recognition.

The implication is that if and when the "universal Syrian Orthodox Church" holds a council representing the whole of it, the patriarch will have the first place in it and the catholicos will occupy the second place. In other words, Mar Dionysius acknowledged a primacy of honour for the patriarch, but he was keen that the Church of Malabar should have its right to self-determination fully guaranteed. For this reason, he stood uncompromisingly by the catholicate.

The position of Mar Dionysius acknowledging the Church of Malabar to be a part of the "universal Syrian Orthodox Church" is definitely a result of the influence which the 19th century history of the Malankara Syrian Church cast on him. It should be recalled that he had inherited a sort of legacy from the synod of Mulanthuruthy of 1876. Through its decrees, as we have seen, that synod had made two points. On the one hand, it admitted that the Church of Malabar had connection with the see of Antioch from ancient times, and on the other it agreed that the Church would keep to that connection in future.[5] The first of these points had reference to history. Though E. M. Philip had tried to defend this reading in his book, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas,* no other historian who has done serious work in the study of the subject takes him seriously. Mar Dionysius, on his part, very judiciously avoids that question altogether. His concern is with the second point, which refers to the future. Accordingly, he is clear that the internal administrative freedom of the Malankara Church should be preserved at any cost.

The two points in the Mulanthuruthy decrees are inter-connected. Till the time when Mar Dionysius left his earthly life in 1934, none of our people had taken up a substantial study of the history of the Indian Church prior to the coming of the Portuguese in the 16th century. On this account E. M. Philip's theories had held the field and the anomalous stand adopted by the synod of Mulanthuruthy could not be exposed. That situation has now changed. We have clear evidence that Syrian Antioch had no connection, directly or indirectly, with the Church of Malabar before 1665.[6] Since then a contact was established between them and from 1751 the patriarch exerted himself to bring this Indian Church under his authority and jurisdiction. Yet, it is only from 1876 that he really succeeded in his efforts, and that too following the confusion which till then prevailed in the Church.

The fact therefore is that the Church of Malabar had a history independent of Antioch. It came within the orbit of that Church's influence to begin with, and the jurisdiction of the Syrian patriarch later, as a result of adverse circumstances which it had to face. In this way the Church of Malabar came to be counted as a part of the Syrian Church of Antioch juridically; it lost sight of its rightful place among historic Churches of the east, as an autonomous Christian community within the context of India. To discover and maintain this place for the Church is the commendable role which the catholicate should play.

What is meant here may call for further elucidation. The historic churches of the east consisting of the three broad traditions, namely the Church of the East,[7] the Oriental Orthodox Churches,[8] and the Eastern Orthodox or Byzantine Orthodox Churches[9], number more than fifteen well established Christian communities. Every one of them holds consistently to its autonomy. The Malankara Syrian Church is an exception here. But for it, every eastern Church would resist any attempt from outside to interfere with its freedom and life. In fact, the concept of a pope or a patriarch claiming universal jurisdiction has never been developed in the east. On the contrary, when it came to be worked out by Rome from about the 4th century, the reaction of the eastern Churches was consistently negative. In the face of this rejection, though Rome tried to create *uniate churches* with members of eastern churches, the programme was not a great success. Rome's achievement in this respect in a few areas like Kerala is only an exception. As a matter of fact, Rome has now begun to show itself willing, as an exercise in ecumenism, to dissuade all concerned from adopting this course of action.

The fact then about the eastern churches is that everyone of them is a self-contained ecclesiastical unit, enjoying the right to self-determination. The Antiochene Syrian Church is only one of them. Two facts about it deserve our attention here. One, as a self-contained Christian community, it has fellowship in eucharistic communion (participation in the holy Qurbana) with equally self-contained Christian communities like the Coptic Church, the Armenian Church and the Ethiopian Church, indicating that in spite of their independent existence they are united in the one Church. It is this relation that should be there between the Church of Antioch and the Church of Malabar. Two, the Syrian patriarch claims supremacy beyond his own

community only over the Church of Malabar. Even here, the fact is that he has not yet shown in a theologically acceptable way what his right to this claim is. For these reasons, the Syrian patriarch of Antioch should remain content with a jurisdiction over his people in the Syrian provinces and their communities dispersed in other lands. If the patriarch would bring himself to follow this course of action and withdraw all jurisdictional claims over the Church of Malabar, the two parties will be able to restore a relation of cordiality between them, thereby enriching each other in different ways as independent ecclesiastical communities.

Though Mar Dionysius VI cannot be credited to have seen all these factual realities and drawn conclusions from them, it should be admitted that he had laid a foundation for future developments in the Church of Malabar. In his day he resisted the patriarch who, in his own words, treated three to four lakhs of people belonging to the Malankara Church as his "slaves".[10] The metropolitan referred here obviously to the patriarch's claim of authority over the Church of Malabar, ignoring its basic rights. However, his involvements in the conflict that raged in the Church did not enable him to become aware of, and react to other "slaveries" which the Antiochene traditions impose on the people of the Church of Malabar. This is an important point deserving the Church's whole-hearted attention.

The Church everywhere has its faith on the one hand, and tradition in worship and life on the other. The latter should conform to the former by resisting all temptations to deviation. In principle the faith of the Church is that which "was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 0: 03), so that a unity in basic emphasis all over is expected. To the question how the faith of the Church should be clarified an answer used to be given by the fathers and councils in ancient times, which still should be considered fundamental. They maintained that the faith consisted in the teaching of the Bible as understood by the fathers and confirmed by the councils of Nicea in 325, Constantinople in 381 and Ephesus in 431. This standpoint is common to the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The Church of Malabar does not anticipate introducing any change in this norm, so that the issue of the faith creates no barrier between it and other Churches.

The subject of the tradition in worship and life is different. It is not the same in all Churches. Forms of worship and regulations

concerning life in the Church have been evolved by Christian communities in the various areas where the Church spread within their own cultural and social settings. That churches have influenced one another at many points is indeed a fact, but that they do not follow the same tradition in worship and life is also an important truth.

Beginning from the seventh decade of the 17th century the Antiochene Syrian forms of worship and traditions in life started coming into Kerala, and gradually the Church of Malabar adopted them. It is the same arrangement thus introduced from late 17th century that continued in the Church during the time of Mar Dionysius VI. In the course of the 20th century a large part of the forms have been rendered into Malayalam, the prose sections into prose and the poetic sections into verses in the same Syriac tunes as the original. In this way the Church of Malabar adopted almost all the forms for the performance of the various sacraments and the orders of service for other occasions, as well as daily offices and special liturgical prayers and hymns for feast days. These forms have grown in the Syrian Church of Antioch over the centuries, from ancient times to about the 13th century. In terms of length, thought-forms, language and idioms as well as of certain theological ideas, all of them stand in need of revision and modification in many places, even for the use of the Syrian Church of Antioch itself. For the Church of Malabar, what is required is not a direct and literal translation of the forms, as it is usually done. On the other hand, they should be properly studied and adapted for use in a meaningful way. This is a vast subject which cannot be taken up for an adequate discussion here. What is to be emphasized is that the Church under the catholicate should exercise the freedom to evolve its own liturgical forms for every occasion as part of its spiritual responsibility.

As regards Church life and discipline also, the Church of Malabar was led to take over its ways from the Antiochene Syrian Church from late 17th century. However, this called for a much longer period of time for people and clergy to assimilate them than the forms of worship. In spite of efforts by patriarch Peter III and the leaders of the Church of Malabar who followed his footsteps, the Antiochene Syrian ways have been observed more by default than by adherence even to this day. Thus the Syrian traditions are looked upon as the ideal, and violations as aberrations. This also is a subject which cannot be treated fully in the present context. What is to be noted is that

it requires substantial study and adaptation under the direction of the catholicate.

The catholicate is the symbol of the Church's autonomy *within the context of its life situation,* as the patriarchate itself is. In order to be an Orthodox Church, the Church of Malabar is not expected to keep to the traditions in the liturgical life and the life of discipline all the way, of the Antiochene Syrian or any other eastern Church. Under the catholicate the Church is entitled to make necessary adaptations that are spiritually more elevating and personally more edifying. As it is, the fact about the Malankara Syrian Church is that it strives to be as Antiochene Syrian as that Church would in fact do. This is an attitude which Mar Dionysius would have endorsed in his earlier days, but not in his later years. It is a pity that the views of Mar Dionysius as a senior person have not been properly recorded, except that we have some of them in his statements made in court and some noted in private conversations. May we hope however that the Holy Spirit will guide the Church under the catholicate that it may play a creative role with reference to these and other matters.

Before concluding, we should be reminded of the point made by Mar Dionysius that the Church of Malabar has the right to be reckoned as an ecclesiastical province of the kind Antioch and other major Christian centres had been in ancient times. Antioch, for example, from being a diocese presided over by a bishop, grew into a patriarchal see later. This happened chiefly in consequence of the city's recognition as the capital of the Roman empire's oriental provinces. The Church of Malabar, considering the fact of its apostolic foundation on the one hand, and India's history and geographical location on the other, has the right to undergo a similar development. Mar Dionysius saw this vision and worked for its realization. The result is the catholicate.

There is one other fact to be remembered concerning Antioch. From the time of the council of Nicea in 325 the Church of the Antiochene provinces lost its unity, and that state continues on the whole to this day. It is only with one of the several bodies into which that Church came to be divided, namely with the community of the ancient Syrian Christian people of the West Asian world, that the Church of Malabar maintained contacts from the 17th century. This community and their patriarch had lost their hold on Antioch decisively from

His Holiness Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I
the ruling Catholicos of the East—from 1975

518 A. D., and from about the middle of the 7th century the community came within the political sway of the Muslim Arabs, who gave up Antioch and chose Damascus as their capital. Subsequently, Antioch lost its importance, even religiously.

The Churches in those areas continue to exist and function, though they have lost a great deal of their ancient vigour and vitality. All of them stand in need of support from churches outside. The Syrian Church of Antioch, with which the Church of Malabar had its contacts, is no exception here. In the face of this reality about his Church, if the Antiochene Syrian patriarch is able to rise in his mind above the thought of making jurisdictional claims over the Church of Malabar, a brotherly relation can be brought about between the catholicos at Kottayam and the patriarch himself.

The catholicate and the patriarchate are indeed equal in rank. What is meant by this statement, which we have already noted, may be spelled out here in conclusion. The catholicos has the right of supervision over his Church, in the same way as the patriarch has it over that of his. Neither of them is higher or lower in rank than the other. Therefore, the notion that either of them is above the other has no basis in reality. The only point which can be raised with reference to their mutual relation is, Who should be counted first. That this right of the primacy of honour, or the reckoning of the first among equals—*primus interpares*—should be deferred to the patriarch is acknowledged by the catholicos.

So far as the Church of Malabar is concerned, its patriarch is the catholicos at Kottayam.

As the Church of Malabar pays its profound respects to the sacred memory of Mar Dionysius VI, it should dedicate itself to follow his example and build on what he had begun. May the remembrance of his saintly life be a blessing to the Church as a whole and to its members individually.

The Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ our great Shepherd, who called Mar Dionysius to His service, is calling the Church as a whole to remain faithful in its ministry. May His name be praised in the Church and in the lives of its members, to the eternal glory of God the Father in the Holy Spirit. Amen

---

FOOT NOTES

Chapter One

1. C. Agur; *Church History of Travancore,* Madras, 1903, pp. 108f. Agur notes the metropolitan concerned here as Mar Thoma IX, but most other writers refer to him as Mar Thoma VII. An amount had already been collected for the purpose by Mar Thoma VI or Valia Mar Dionysius. See also the essay by P. A. Oommen in *Irupatham Nutandile Malankara Sabha,* ed. Father T. G. Zachariah and Sri K.V. Mammen, 1977, pp. 202f.
2. This metropolitan is noted below p. 27.
3. See Canon 4 of the council of Nicea in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* second series, Vol. XIV. The principle underlying the Nicene ruling is noted below p. 107. See also pp. 94f.
4. The story of how this tradition developed in the Antiochene Syrian Church is noted below pp. 96, 106f.
5. The extent of the liturgical reform envisaged here by the missionaries is not known. For one thing, it is a fact that in 1818 the Malankara Syrian Church had practically no Malayalam translation of the Syrian forms of worship.
6. We have no direct evidence that a party made an appeal of this kind to the patriarch, but the incidents connected with the episode can be explained only by this assumption.
7. *Malankara Nasranikal,* op. cit., III, pp. 123f.
8. The six points, as C. Agur incorporates them, are: a) "The candidates for ordination should be ordained by the Metran only after receiving certificates of qualification". b) "That all accounts relating to property should be examined annually". c) "That some means should be devised for providing priests with a permanent source of income". d) "That schools should be established in all places". e) "That priests should expound the Gospel to the people". f) "That prayers should be rendered into the vernacular, and that one of the Liturgies of the mass should be translated into Malayalam". Agur: op. cit. pp. 120-121. See Paret, op. cit.III, pp. 140-142 for his comments.
9. For the *Mavelikara Padiyola,* see Agur, op. cit., pp. 120f.
10. The Award is discussed by Agur, op. cit., p. 128. P. A. Oommen notes it on the authority of T. K. Veluppillai, *State Manual,* p. 738. See Oommen, op. cit., pp. 203f.
11. This allegation is a sort of hobgoblin in the Church of Malabar even to this day. Those who raise it are led by the idea that for valid episcopal standing a person is expected to accept communion with Rome, as Roman Catholics argue, or the supremacy of the patriarch as the Antiochene partisans insist. Both these are one-sided arguments. See below pp. 106f.
12. See Malankara Nasranikal (M. N.), III, pp. 176f.
13. In the court case after the time of Mathews Mar Athanasius, his successor Thomas Mar Athanasius denied the genuineness of these letters, but none of the judges accepted his argument.
14. This letter had been produced in court, and is noted by Z. M. Paret, op. cit., III, pp. 144-145.
15. Ibid. pp. 163f.
16. In Syria of those times seal used to take the place of signature.

17. The letter of Mar Dionysius IV in this connection is noted by Z. M. Paret: M. N. III, pp. 145f.
18. L. W. Brown: *Indian Christians of St. Thomas,* Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 143.
19. The judgment of justice Ormsby deserves to be brought out of oblivion and studied carefully in our times.
20. Patriarch Peter III wrote a strong letter to the members of the Managing Committee, protesting against the judgment. The letter in a Malayalam translation is included by Z. M. Paret, M. N. III, pp. 234f.
21. The book of *Hudaya* was compiled in Syriac by Bar Ebraya from different sources, with no thought of the needs of the Indian Church. A large part of the book is drawn on the *Synodicon in the West Tradition,* which contains rulings adopted by the Antiochene Syrian Church till about the 12th century. See *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* C.S.C.O., 367, 368, 375, and 376.
22. The law book of the reform party is noted by Paret, op. cit., VIII, pp. 386f.
23. For the Synod of Mulanthuruthy, see Paret: *The Synod of Mulanthuruthy,* Malayalam.
24. This resolution implied a very clever move on the part of patriarch Peter III to bring the Church of Malabar under his control firmly.
25. The registered deeds are noted by Paret, III, p. 230.
26. M. N., op. cit., IX, p. 600.
27. A. A. Mingana, *Early Spread of Christianity in India,* Manchester, 1926, pp. 36f.
28. V. C. Samuel, *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined,* C.L.S., Madras, 1977, p. 137.
29. The Arabs of the Abbasid dynasty established their rule in the 8th century with Baghdad as their capital. They were defeated by the Turks in the 13th century.
30. All these facts are discussed by this author in his *Sabha Valarunnu,* pp. 25f.
31. Even historians like E. M. Philip who argue that the Church of Malabar had, from at least the 4th century, come within the jurisdiction of the see of Antioch, admit that bishops were coming to India from both the 'Nestorian' and the 'Jacobite' lines. See *The Indian Church of St. Thomas* (Malayalam), pp. 85f.
32. Mar Ivanios who came in 1685 along with Mar Baselios seems to have been a learned man in ecclesiastical subjects. He took up the theological question concerning the person of Jesus Christ, and the issue related to marriage versus celibacy of priests. See E. M. Philip, op. cit., pp. 166, 167.
33. Neither the Roman Catholics nor the Anglicans had any sympathy for the Nestorian position. It was the traditional standpoint on the subject that they maintained till fairly recent times, but now the Anglican Church officially befriends the Nestorian Church, and the Roman Catholic Church is willing to withdraw its ancient condemnation on the subject.
34. Patriarch Geevarghese had written a letter to Mar Thoma V, expressing his mind on the matter. A Malayalam translation of this letter is included by Paret. See M. N., III, pp. 31f.
35. For the Anjur Church, see above pp. 4f.
36. See above p. 8, 22f.
37. C. Agur. op. cit., pp. 109f.
38. The Antiochene Syrian patriarch Michael the Great of the 12th century says clearly in his monumental *History of the Church* that the Syrian patriarchs had lost touch with Antioch altogether from 518. See p. 456.

Chapter Two

1. Mar Dionysius admitted that he did not know the English language well enough, but he acknowledged having read the *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Anglican Church. M. N., VIII, p. 638.
2. Ibid. p. 139.
3. In the Preface to the *Mathopadeshasarangal* (*Basic Doctrines of Religion*) the author notes such writings. M. N. X, p. 619
4. M. N., IV, pp. 25f.
5. M. N., op. cit., IV, p. 46.
6. Ibid. pp. 72f.
7. M.N., op. cit., III, p. 291.
8. See above p. 21.
9. See Peter III's letter to the Managing Committee, noted above p. 19. The patriarch argues in it that his authority in both spiritual and temporal spheres is ordained by God, and no power on earth can violate it.
10. This fact is noted by Mar Dionysius in his speech to the managing committee on 7 September 1911. See M. N., VIII, p. 25. See also ibid., pp. 65, 141, 142.
11. Ibid., pp. 141f.
12. See above p. xxii, where the change of mind that Mar Dionysius VI may in all probability have undergone is noted.
13. M. N., op. cit., IV, pp. 136f.
14. M. N., op. cit., IV, pp. 150 – 173.
15. Ibid., IV. pp. 185, 189; VIII, pp. 75 – 76; pp. 141f.
16. M. N. IV, p. 190.
17. Ibid., p. 210. The patriarch sent the invitation on 31 October 1909.
18. M. N., IV, p. 211 and VIII, pp. 85–86.
19. Ibid., VIII, p. 87.
20. The issues in question between the metropolitan trustee and the co-trustees are noted below p. 81.
21. Patriarch Peter III also made the same claim. See his letter to the Managing Committee, noted above p. 18.
22. See above pp. 18f.
23. For the story of Joachim Mar Kurillos, see above pp. 11f.
24. The history of the Malankara Syrian Church before 1875 is noted in the previous chapter. See in particular pp. 25f.
25. For the synod of Mulanthuruthy and its claims, see above pp. 16f.
26. M. N., VIIII, pp. 96f. The patriarch tried in various ways to make Mar Dionysius VI agree to his demand, but he refused to yield.
27. M. N., IV, op. cit., pp. 27f.
28. M. N., IV, pp. 268, 269.
29. M. N., VIII, p. 89.
30. M. N., VIII, pp. 91f., IV, pp. 251f., 256f., 263f.
31. M. N., VII, p. 105.
32. On 14 July 1918 Mar Dionysius VI deposed in the Church case that the letter of the patriarch excommunicating him had been composed by Mathen malpan of Konat, the priest trustee, as the language was definitely his.
33. M. N., op. cit. IV, p. 361

34. Julius Mar Alvares was a Goanese person who had left the Roman Catholic Church and joined the Malankara Syrian Church. He was made a metropolitan in the days of Mar Dionysius V with patriarchal approval.
35. M. N. IV, pp. 373f.
36. Ibid. pp. 364f. Facts about Mar Abdul Messiah (see above p. 33) are such that his standing in the Church as its patriarch can on no account be questioned. He was therefore the canonical patriarch throughout his life.
37. Fearing that the person holding the title 'the Metropolitan of Malankara' would hold episcopal synods with himself as president, patriarch Peter III had objected to the title with reference to Mar Dionysius V. Now Mar Abdullah was following up the tradition laid by the previous patriarch. The Alwaye meeting admitted it in its extreme subserviance to the patriarch.
38. See above p. 33.
39. As the patriarch who was senior to Mar Abdullah and who had the canonical standing in the Church, Mar Abdul Messiah nullified the excommunication of Mar Dionysius by the former, no question is possible therefore to be raised against him.
40. Both these *kalpanas* in Malayalam translation are included by Paret. See M. N., IV, pp. 457f.
41. See above p. 43.
42. M. N. IV, pp. 418-428. Realizing the explosive situation in the seminary, people on his side engaged a physically strong and stout man to stay in the seminary in order to guard the metropolitan from attacks of hirelings
43. M. N. IV, pp. 474–477.
44. M. N. IV, pp. 477f.
45. Ibid., pp. 469f.
46. For a summary of the judgment in Malayalam translation, see ibid. pp. 484-488.
47. M. N. IV, pp. 492–494.
48. Ibid. p. 508.
49. Ibid. p. 510.
50. See ibid. pp. 496–508, where Paret puts in some of those articles.
51. Ibid., pp. 508 and 615. Paret is emphatic that the problem here was the result of a refusal on the part of the judges to admit that the Alwaye meeting of 1918, which elected Paulose Mar Athanasius, did represent the whole community. But P. A. Oommen shows that the fault was that the approval of his election by the patriarch had not been presented in court. See *Irupatham Nuttandile Malankara Sabha*, op. cit. p. 231.
52. M. N. IV., p. 597.
53. M. N. IV., p. 611.
54. Ibid. pp. 622f.
55. M. N. IX, p. 567, and M. N. IV, p. 611.
56. M. N. IV, p. 716..
57. Ibid. VIII, p. 125.
58. M. N. IV, p. 652.
59. Paret describes how E. J. Uthup, a senior clerk in the high court, managed the affair in a memorable way. See M. N. IV, pp. 649–652.
60. Ibid. p. 663.
61. Ibid. p. 665.
62. M. N. IV, pp. 665f.

63. Ibid. pp. 617f; see also pp. 682–689.
64. Ibid. pp. 695f.
65. M. N. IV, pp. 655f.
66. Ibid. p. 643.
67. Ibid. p. 697.
68. Ibid. p. 699.
69. Ibid. p. 677.
70. See above p. 51.
71. For the letter, see M. N. IV, pp. 696f.
72. Ibid. p. 699.
73. M. N., IV, pp. 725f.
74. Ibid. pp. 726f.
75. This fact is known to the author directly.
76. M. N. IV, pp. 739f. India was then under the British rule. The country had the Viceroy as the head of state, representing the British crown. If the patriarch wanted to help the Malankara Syrian Church regain its unity on respectable terms, this was the most opportune moment, but he turned it down.
77. M. N , IV, pp. 741f.
78. M. N., IV, pp. 746f.
79. Ibid. pp. 768–771.
80. See above p. 31, where, as Father P. T. Geevarghese, the man is noted.

Chapter Three

1. Mar Abdullah's letter of excommunication is reproduced by Paret in M. N. IV, pp. 342-345. See also ibid. VIII, pp. 804–810.
2. The judgment is noted in ibid. IX, pp. 475–505. For a summary, see ibid. IV, pp. 478–482.
3. Paret incorporates the work, ibid, X, pp. 619–684. The work is noted above p. 31 and p. 67.
4. For a reference to Bar Ebraya, see above p. 18.
5. For the use of the word 'Jacobite' with reference to the Malankara Syrian Church, see above p. 22.
6. The metropolitan made the point once in court that he did not want to speak slightingly of any one. See M. N., VIII, p. 381.
7. See M. N., volumes VIII, IX, and X.
8. Ibid., VIII, p. 579. Mar Dionysius admits having read the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.
9. Ibid., pp. 537, 614. The metropolitan acknowledges his indebtedness to Bar Ebraya for his knowledge in Church history. He does also admit the fact that he had read some other books, though he does not remember which ones they were.
10. M. N., VIII, p. 380.
11. The words 'omnipotent', 'omniscient' and 'omnipresent' are of Latin origin. They mean 'almighty', 'all-knowing' and 'everywhere present'.
12. A clear example of this truth is found in the service for the Pentecostal Sunday.
13. M. N., IX, p. 579.

14. The *Basic Doctrines* notes here that the incarnate Son is "one nature, one person and one *parsupa*". As to what *parsupa* is, the author states that it refers to 'a form which can be discerned by the mind'. We render it here as 'the outward aspect of a person', which indeed is what the word means.
15. M. N., IX, p. 580.
16. Churches in the east and the west which accepted the council of Chalcedon of 451 adopted this standpoint as thier official teaching.
17. See *Hudaya,* II, 2; and VIII, 3. Quoting earlier canonical regulations Bar Ebraya enjoins that the churches which differ from us on the question of the person and nature of Jesus Christ should not be treated on the same basis as those who differ in the doctrine of God. Those who join us from the former should not be rebaptized.
18. The division in the Church based on this difference goes back to the council of Chalcedon of 451. In order to study the subject well, a number of theological consultations have been held during the last two decades, in which theological experts from these churches participated. They have come to the conclusion that the churches concerned hold essentially the same faith, though they differ in their respective language.
19. M. N., vol. IX, p. 580.
20. Ibid., p. 581.
21. See above pp. 71f. for the difference between those who accepted and those who rejected the council of Chalcedon.
22. See above p. 23.
23. See Hudaya 2.
24. Here as elsewhere Mar Dionysius is loyal to the *Hudaya.*
25. M. N., IX, p. 678.
26. Ibid., VIII, p. 375.
27. Ibid., p. 384.
28. Thomas Mar Athanasius was the successor of Mathews Mar Athanasius whom the latter consecrated in 1868.
29. For this discussion, see M. N., VIII, pp. 380f.
30. That Mathews Mar Athanasius assumed the role of a priest, while he really was not one was a wide-spread allegation against him. See E. M. Philip, *Mar Thoma Sleehayude Indian Sabha,* 1951, p. 236.
31. M. N., VIII, p. 427. For a reference to popular notions on the effects of excommunications, see above p. 45.
32. Mar Dionysius makes this point consistently. See M. N. IX pp. 569–570.
33. Ibid., p. 571.
34. M. N., VIII, p. 506, p. 588, cp. *Hudaya,* 2:1.
35. See above pp. 73 and 74.
36. Paret shows that there is no recorded evidence to say that Mathews Mar Athanasius was or was not excommunicated by any patriarch (M. N. III, p. 188). In his letter of excommunication against Mar Dionysius partriarch Abdullah notes: 'We excommunicate, depose and alientae you thoroughly from the lofty rank of high-priesthood'. Therefore, 'from the hour you receive this missive, you have no authority or permission to be a high-priest or kathanar, or to perform any action pertaining to the priestly rank' (M. N. IV, p. 345).
37. The truth of this story has to be examined historically.
38. The question of the faith is important and cannot be slurred over.

39. See M. N., IV, pp. 125–130.
40. M. N. IV, pp. 184f.
41. Ibid., pp. 202–204; VIII, pp. 82–83.
42. Ibid. IV, pp. 205f.
43. Ibid., pp. 234f.
44. Ibid., pp. 247–264.
45. See the first letter of *Jatyabhimani* in M. N., IV, pp. 230–239.
46. See above p. 42.
47. For the Cochin Award, see above p. 12.
48. M. N., IV, pp. 187–188, and VIII, pp. 72f.
49. Ibid., VIII, pp. 67–69.
50. Ibid., IV, p. 189. See VIII, pp. 52–55, where a letter of Mar Dionysius answering the objection raised by the priest-trustee is included.
51. Ibid., VIII, pp. 246–247.
52. Paret notes these points on the basis of the judgment. See M. N. III, p. 251.
53. For a reference to the royal court judgment, see above pp. 17f.
54. The synod of Mulanthuruthy is noted above pp. 19f.
55. M. N., VIII, pp. 418f.
56. Recent historians of the pre-Portuguese Indian Church would disagree with Mar Dionysius at this point. They hold the view that during the 7th to the 9th centuries, and possibly also later, the Indian Church was recognized as an ecclesiastical province with a metropolitan of its own, within the ecclesiastical set up of the East Syrian patriarch of Persia. (See A. M. Mundadan: *History of Christianity in India,* vol. I, CHAI, 1984, pp. 101f.
57. M. N., VIII, p. 419.
58. Ibid. pp. 437–438.
59. Ibid. pp. 450f. This should be done by the synod of the province concerned.
60. For the *Hudaya,* see above pp. 18 and 19.

Chapter Four

1. See above p. 20.
2. This point deserves special notice. Patriarch Peter III had enjoined that male members of the Church should grow beard, women should put on their dress in the same fashion as Syrian women do, and so on. See, M. N., III, pp. 244f.
3. It was the Eastern Syriac that was in use in the Church of Malabar when the Portuguese came to India. This is continued by the Syro—Malabarian section in the Roman Catholic Church. It is the section that stood with the bishop bearing the name of Mar Thoma from 1665 that adopted the Western Syriac.
4. Bar Ebraya is noted above p. 18.
5. M. N. IV, pp. 796f.
6. M. N., IV, p. 554.
7. Ibid., p. 556.
8. See below pp. 100f.
9. For a reference to the letters of patriarch Abdul Messiah, see above pp. 46f.
10. M. N. VIII, p. 428.

11. What is meant here should be noted. From about the 4th century bishops of the major centres of the empire like Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, claimed a sort of precedence over the sees in their neighbourhoods. They came to be called 'patriarchs ' at times, but the custom of raising a person belonging to an episcopal rank to that of a patriarch developed much later.

12. M. N., VIII, p. 114. We have already noted Mar Dionysius' reference to the state of the early Church. See above pp. 83f.

13. See above pp. 4f.

14. See canon 4 of Nicea noted above p. 4.

15. See the documents in E. Schwartz: *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum,* Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1933: II.

16. For the incident, see Bar Ebraya, *Ecclesiastical History,* Syriac manuscript, Pampakuda, pp. 282–283. The incident in noted before Bar Ebraya by patriarch Michael. See his *Ecclesiastical History,* Syriac, op.cit. pp. 436f.

17. See above p. 23.

18. The most important of such source materials is the *Synodicon Orientale,* which J. B. Chabot published in Paris in 1902. Studies based on it aswell as on other original documents have been brought out in English by W. A. Wigram: *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church,* London, 1910, and William G. Young: *Patriarch, Shah and Caliph,* Rawalpindi, 1974. This work was known in Kerala in the 16th century.

19. See V. C. Samuel, *Sabha Valarunnu,* Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, 1984, which notes the salient problems which the story has to face.

20. In connection with the institution of the Catholicate Day in Lent from 1934, a free translation of Bar Ebraya's *Ecclesiastical History* was published in Malayalam under the leadership of late O. M. Cherian. Our Sunday School text books have been prepared by persons who have drawn their information from that publication. It is high time that a more accurate account of history is published for use in our Sunday school teaching.

21. See above p. 90, where the question of language is noted

22 See above p. 23.

23. See above p. 99.

24. In 435 Ihiba (Ibas) was made metropolitan of Edessa. A staunch supporter of Nestorius, he succeeded in taking possession of the Edessan school, and it continued in the party's control till about 470 A.D.

25. We have referred to this incident, above p. 23. See Bar Ebraya, Ec. Hist., op. cit., pp. 119–120. E. M. Philip and some pther authors on the subject refer this incident to a council held in 498, without showing their basis for the date.

26. Bar Ebraya, Ec. Hist., op. cit., pp. 113, 117.

27. All these arrangements are noted in the *Hudaya,* 7: 1. See also Bar Ebraya, Ec. Hist., op. cit., pp. 103–108. They are noted below p. 102.

28. See above p. 23.

29. A Mingana: *The Early Spread of Christianity in India,* Manchester, 1926, noted above pp. 28f.

30. M. N., op. cit., IV, p. 632.

31. The metropolitans thus conseerated were:— Alexios Mar Theodosius, Thomas Mar Dionysius, Mar Severios Valakuzhi (who joined the Church of Rome), Mathews Mar Ivanios, Mathews Mar Athanasios (the present catholicos), Daniel Mar Philoxenos, Mathews Mar Kurillos (the present catholicos-designate), and Pathrose Mar Osthathios.

32. The title 'archbishop' is in rank equal to that of a metropolitan, which is noted above pp. 94f. Unlike the Antiochene Syrian Church, the Church of Rome keeps more or less to the old arrangement. Accordingly, it requires that an archbishop or metropolitan must have his suffragan bishop or bishops.
33. The 'East Syrian rite' refers to the rite of the Persian Church.
34. The eight communities are:— the Syro-Malabar body which continue in communion with Rome from the 17th century, the Syro-Malankara body which joined the Church of Rome with Mar Ivanios and his successors, the Orthodox body led by the catholicate, the Jacobite body owing allegiance to the patriarch, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, the body of Syrian Christians who joined the Anglican Church and who now form part of the Church of South India, the Independent Syrian Church of Anjur or Thozhiyur, the Church of the East which follows the East Syrian traditions with Trichur as its headquarters.
35. By the words 'east' and 'west' the provinces under the control of the catholicos (or maphrian) and the patriarch respectively are meant.
36. This fact is known to the present writer directly from Mar Jacob III himself, whom he had the opportunity of meeting personally on a few occasions between 1960 and 1968.
37. See above p. 25.
38. For this observation of patriarch Abdullah, see Z. M. Paret, M. N., IV, pp. 223, 213, and 238 particularly p. 223.
39. This conference was convened under the initiative of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The present writer was not only involved in its organizing work, but served in it as a delegate of the Malankara Orthodox Church and as a member of the Standing Committee appointed by the conference to continue its work.
40. See above p. 94.
41. For a reference to Mar Baselios Yaldo, see above p. 25.
42. Mar Baselios Sakralla is noted above on p. 26.
43. M. N., III, op. cit., pp. 274f.

Chapter Five

1. This point is noted above p. 29.
2. The story of Mar Dionysius' excommunication is told above pp. 43f.
3. See the essay by the Revd. Father Jacob Manalil in Souvenir: *Vattaseril Mar Dionysius, 50th Death Anniversary,* pp. 21f.
4. M. N., op. cit., IX, p. 609.
5. Ibid., IV, p. 64.
6. See above pp. 95f., where Mar Dionysius spells out his position concerning the issue.
7. M. N., op. cit., VIII, pp. 285-86. The question was asked again on 28 October 1918. See ibid., p. 619.
8. M. N., op. cit. IV, p. 344.
9. Ibid., pp. 818f. See also VIII, p. 573.
10. The original of the letter may have been in English. The excerpt here is an English rendering of the Malayalam included by Paret. See. M. N , IV, op. cit., p. 810.
11. Souvenir, op. cit., pp. 38f.
12. See above pp. 58f.

13. The criminal case could have been allowed to continue, in which case the defendants would have received heavier punishments, but Mar Dionysius did not let that happen.
14. Mar Dionysius' Will is noted above p. 66.
15. See above p. 43.
16. The Iyenkar verdict is noted above p. 49.
17. This was on the same day when the judgment was announced in Trivandrum. The possibility of telephonic conversation was not then available.
18. M. N., IV, op. cit., p. 819.
19. See above p. 95, where we have noted that the Church's ministry consisted of the three orders of deacon, presbyter, and bishop. The patriarch is a rank in the third order, not above it, and all the three orders are in the one community of the Church.
20. See above p. 89.
21. See above p. 96.
22. Mar Dionysius does not seem to have seen the development of the patriarchate in the Antiochene Syrian Church accurately, though it is discussed by Bar Ebraya, and before him by patriarch Michael.
23. 'Autocephalous' means 'having its own head'.
24. See above p. 42.
25. See above p. 108.
26. See Souvenir, op. cit., p. 37.
27. See above pp. 64f. Souvenir, op. cit., p. 36.
28. M. N., IX, pp. 392f.
29. See above pp. 73f.
30. M. N., IV, pp. 569f.
31. M. N. op. cit., IV, pp. 358f.
32. For the speech, see Ibid., pp. 377f.
33. For a reference to the judgment, see above p. 48. The letter of the metropolitan to C. J. Kurien is reproduced in ibid. pp. 483f. The letter was dated 7 September 1919, and the judgment was given on 15 September 1919.
34. Souvenir, op, cit., p. 37.
35. See V. M. Ittyerah: *K. C. Chacko of Alwaye*, Alwaye, 1978, p. 12.
36. Souvenir, op. cit., p. 39.

Conclusion

1. See above pp. 61f.
2. See article in Souvenir, op. cit., pp. 112f.
3. See above pp. 108f.
4. The name "Orthodox Syrian Church of the East" as a reference to the Malankara Church presided over by the catholicos at Kottayam has come to be in official use. Behind the words "Orthodox Syrian" a differentiation is meant to be drawn between them and "Syrian Orthodox", referring the former to the Church of Malabar and the latter to the Church of Antioch. Behind the words "of the East" there lies the emphasis that the catholicos at Kottayam is the catholicos of the East. The use of these words in both cases is not devoid of difficulties, into which we do not enter here.

5. See Paret, *Mulanthuruthy Sunahados*, Kottayam, 1968, pp. 100. 113, 164,176. See also M. N., III, pp. 221–225.
6. See V. C. Samuel, *Sabha Valarunnu*, op. cit., pp. 69f.
7. The Church of Persia, which accepted Nestorius as a saint is meant here.
8. The five eastern Churches which do not accept the council of Chalcedon of 451 are referred to by this name.
9. The Churches of the East which accept the council of 451 are noted.
10. See above p. 118.

INDEX

A

Abdul Messiah, Mar: Patriarch 33, 44f., 86, 91, 93, 94, 104
Abdullah, Mar: Patriarch 33f. 36f., 39f., 47, 54, 56, 57, 62, 63, 78, 79, 80, 83, 107, 113, 114
Abraham malpan 9, 76
Acacius, Catholicos 101
Addis Abeba 107
Agur, C. 2, 7 n. 8
Alleppey 43, 81
Alvares, Mar Julius 32, 42f.
Alwaye 44, 60, 124, 127
Anglican 1, 5, 7
Anglican, Anglican Church 1, 2, 5, 27, 68, 72f., 74f., 77
Anglican communion 7, 73f., 77
Anjur (Thozhiyur) Church 5, 10, 27
Antioch, Antiochene 3, 6, 8, 9, 13, 19, 45, 52, 53, 58, 59, 69, 70, 73, 78, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 101, 102, 103, 114, 118, 119, 121, 125, 128, 129, 130, 131, 133
Arabic Canons 95, 99
Arbitration 8, 60
Archbishop 65, 95, 105
Archdeacon 23, 97
Athanasius, St. 69
Athanasius, Mar Mathews 9f., 60, 76
Athanasius, Mar Paulose 42f., 49
Athanasius, Mar: Syrian bishop 7
Athanasius, Mar Thoma 10
Augen I, Mar Baselios Catholicos 105f.
Authority 17f., 20, 42f., 47, 79, 80, 83, 94, 128
Authority, political 1, 22
Authority, spiritual 19, 39f., 48f.
Authority, temporal 39f., 48f., 83
Autonomy 68, 78, 82
Ayilyam Thirunal Maharaja 12

B

Babylon 23, 25, 102
Baghdad 102
Baptism 74, 76
Bar Ebraya, Gregorios 18, 67, 72, 91, 98, 99, 103, 105
Baselios, Mar Geevarghese I, Catholicos 104f.
Baselios, Mar Geevarghese II, Catholicos 105f.
Baselios, Mar Ivanios Catholicos 25, 108
Baselios, Mar Sakralla Catholicos 26, 108
Baselios, Mar Thoma Mathews I Catholicos 107f.
Baselios, Mar Yaldo Catholicos 25, 108
Basic Doctrines (*Mathopadeshasarangal*) 29, 67f
Beth Gaza 81
Bethany 64f., 78, 105, 120
Bible 5, 68
Bombay 38, 50
Bosrah 50
Britain 1
British 1, 4
Buchanan, Claudius, Dr. 5, 27

C

Calcutta 7, 24, 125
Calicut 1
Calvinist 2
Canon Law 18, 94f.
Canonical 4, 105f.
Catholic, Roman 23, 64f., 71, 73, 74, 77
Catholicate 46f., 90f., 121
Catholicate, Kottayam I 103
Catholicate, Kottayam II 104

Catholicate, Kottayam III 105
Catholicate, Kottayam IV 106f.
Catholicate, Kottayam V 107f.
Catholicate of Seleucia 98f.
Catholicate of Tagrith 102f.
Catholicos 23, 45f., 84, 88, 98f., 102, 120, 127
Chacko, K. C. 125
Chacko, M. A. 38
Chalcedon, The council of 19, 71f., 96
Chatfield, Chief Justice 54
Christian 71, 96, 113, 115
Christianity 1, 23, 98
Church Missionary Society 2, 51
Church of Rome 64, 78, 122
Church, Syrian of Antioch 22, 94, 114
Cochin Award 8, 12, 80, 81
Cochin, the state of 11, 13, 17, 42, 82
Communion 74
Community 43
Consecration 3, 9, 14, 32f., 45f., 51, 64, 78, 112
Constantinople 16, 99, 130
Constitution 66, 127
Court of Law 15, 62
Court, District 15, 48
Court, High 49
Court, Royal of Appeal 17, 40
Court, Supreme 105
Ctesiphon, Seleucia 23, 98
Cyril, St. 69

D

Deacon 17, 88
Delegate 34f., 56
Deposit money 2, 55, 80
Diamper, The synod of 24
Diarbeker (Amida) 14
Diocese 83
Dionysius, Mar I 27f.
.... II 3, 66
.... III 6
.... IV 6f., 13
.... V 14f., 30f., 109, 111
Dioscorus, Mar: Syrian bishop 6
Directors, Board of 18f.
Dutch 2

E

East India Company 2, 13, 80
East Syriac 90
East Syrian 90
Ecclesiastical 91, 100, 102
Ecumenical 72, 125, 129
Edessa 99, 101
Elias II, Mar: Patriarch 9
Elias III, Mar: Patriarch 49, 56f., 89, 92, 107
England 8, 74
English 8, 10, 69, 79
Ephesus, The council of 23, 74, 101, 130
Episcopa 83, 95f.
Episcopal 4, 5, 13, 20, 49, 75, 79, 87, 97, 112
Ethiopia 98
Eucharist 74
Excommunication 43, 49, 75, 76, 77, 78, 113, 114

F

Faith 24, 49, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 78, 125
Father, God the 70f.

G

Gabriel, Mar: Syrian bishop 25
Geevarghese, P. T. Father 31, 104
Geevarghese, V. J. Father 30f., 64f.
God 70f.
Gore, Charles Dr., Anglican bishop 60
Gregorios, Mar of Jerusalem 6, 22f.
Gregorios, Mar Syrian bishop 26f.
Gregorios, Mar of Parumala 3f., 79, 90

H

Hierarchy 83, 88, 95, 100, 108
Hindu 82, 115
Historian 96
History 69, 85, 97, 98
Holy Spirit 70f.
Hudaya 18, 19, 82, 84, 85, 91, 94, 95, 97, 105, 108

I

Incarnation 70f.
India Secretary 48
Interdict 50f., 60, 127
Irvin, Lord 59f.
Istambul 16, 33
Ittoop writer 17
Ivanios, Mar: Syrian bishop 25
Ivanios, Mar: Syrian bishop 27f.
Ivanios, Mar Murimattam 30, 32f., 42, 45, 70, 85
Ivanios, Mar of Bethany 64f., 78, 104f., 122
Ivanios, Mar of Paret 122

J

Jacob II, Mar: Patriarch 11, 14, 15
Jacob III, Mar: Patriarch 106
Jacob, Father Manalil 112
"Jacobite" 8, 22, 68, 71, 72f.
Jathikukarthavian 23
Jerusalem 44, 109
John, E. J. 37, 38, 49, 124
Joseph kathanar—
Mar Dionysius II 3f.
Joseph kathanar—
Mar Dionysius V 14f.
Julius, Mar Elias, delegate 50f., 56
Jurisdiction 6, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 88, 99f., 129, 130, 133

K

Kallungathra 10
Kandanad 9, 42, 45, 58, 108
Kattumangattu 4
Kerala 1, 6, 18, 69, 78, 79, 86
Kerala, the Church of 82, 88
Kerala Council of Churches vi
Kerr, Richard Hall 5, 27
Kochuparambil 33, 111
Kottarakara 10
Kottayam 29, 32, 36, 39, 43f., 55, 56, 90, 91f., 92f., 94, 105, 108, 109, 112, 115, 117f.
Kurien, C. J. 36, 47, 53, 55, 57, 123, 124
Kurien, P. C. 127
Kurillos, Joachim Mar 11f., 40, 41
Kurillos, Paulose Mar 34f., 48, 49, 80, 89, 109
Kuruppanpady 62

L

Litigation 14f., 47f., 53f., 66, 76, 112, 113, 117, 118
London 13, 16

M

Macaulay, Colin: Resident 1, 2
Majilis 19, 82
Malabar, the Church of 2, 5f., 66, 68
Malankara Association 19, 32f.
Malankara Metropolitan 35f.
Malankara Nasranikal 68
Malankara Syrian Church 2, 6, 21, 66, 88, 89, 125, 126, 127
Malayala Manorama 49, 80
Malayalam 32
Mallappally 29f.
Malpan, Abraham of Maramon 9
Malpan of Konat 3, 36f., 109

Malpan, Mathen of Konat 30, 37, 44, 55, 109, 121
Mammen Mappillai, K. C. 31, 49
Managing Committee 19
Manjanikara 63
Mardin 9, 49, 60, 92, 104, 106
Marutha of Miapherket 99
Marutha of Tagrith 90f.
Mathopadeshasarangal 31, 67f.
Mar Thoma I 24f.
..... II 25
..... III 25
..... IV 25
..... V 25f.
..... VI (Mar Dionysius I) 26f.
..... VII 2f.
Mavelikara 6, 8, 10
Mesopotamia 23, 91
Michael the Syrian, Patriarch 22, 28
Mooron 106
Moses bar Keepha 68
Mott, Dr. John R. 125
Mulanthuruthy, the synod of 16f., 28, 42, 53, 82, 85, 89, 128
Munro, John: Colonel, Resident 1f., 5

N

National Council of Churches vi
Nestorian 22, 23, 25, 73, 74, 101, 127
Nestorian Church 23f., 73
Nestorius 23, 101
Nicea, the council of 4, 23, 95, 96, 130, 132
Nisibis, the school of 101
Nityaksharangal

O

Oath of the Coonen Cross 24, 121
Oommen, P. A. 49
Ordination 3f.
Ormsby, W. 17
Orthodox 77, 90, 103, 105, 127
Osthathios, Mar Sleeba 34f., 44, 78
Oxios 37

P

Padiyola, Kallungathara 10
Padiyola, Mavelikara 8, 10
Pakalomattam 12
Paret, Z. M. 68, 109, 122
Parsupa 71
Papacy 93
Papal
Parumala 30, 31, 32
Patriarch 9f., 15f., 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 29, 32, 33, 36, 37f., 44, 49f., 55, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83, 87, 88, 91, 94f., 96, 103, 106f., 109, 114, 116, 118, 123, 126, 127
Patriarchal 11, 25, 28, 33, 49
Patriarchate 24, 97
Persia 23f., 91, 98, 99, 100, 101, 103
Peter III, Mar: Patriarch 16f., 69, 74, 75, 77, 86, 88
Philip, E. M. 69, 128
Philoxenos II, Mar 3f.
Police 43, 55
Portuguese 2
Prayer 67, 110, 115, 121
Priest (Presbyter) 9, 75, 83, 88, 95
Principle 52, 54, 77, 83, 102, 113
Protestant 1
Province, ecclesiastical 83, 84, 85

Q

Quilon 11, 13
Qurbana, holy 9, 74, 76, 114, 129
Quyomtha Namaskarakramam 31

R

Rani Gauri Lakshmibai 3
Rani Gauri Parvathibai 12
Reform 9, 68
Reformation 75
Reform Party 12
Regional

Registered deed 19f., 40f.
Resident 1, 2, 15
Roman Catholic Church 68, 73, 77
Rome 24f., 73, 78
Royal court judgment 17, 75
Royal proclamation 12

S

Sacraments
Sankara Pillai, G. 48f., 67, 115, 124
Sankunny Menon, Kottarathil 31
Seal 11
Seleucia Ctesiphon 23, 98f., 102
Seminary, M. D. 30f.
Seminary, Old 3f., 14, 30, 32
Seminary, Parumala 32
Seminary, Orthodox Theological vi
Serampore College (University) vi
Severios, Mar 41
Severios, St. 69
Shoranur 51
Staticon 9, 26, 35
Stephanos, Mar: Syrian bishop 12f.
Succession, priestly 3f., 75f.
Sunday School 99
Suspension case 55f., 112
Synod 16f., 38f.
Syriac 3, 30, 90, 99
Syrian 104
Syrian Orthodox 127

T

Tablets 74
Tadagam vi
Tagrith 90f., 102, 103, 108, 127
Theologian 72
Theological 3, 76
Theophilos, Mar 65
Thomas, St. 16, 55
Tradition 69, 70, 71, 72, 90, 119, 125, 127
Trinity, God the 70f.
Triune God 70f., 74
Trivandrum 48, 67
Trusty 39, 44, 47, 71, 80, 89, 126
Turkey 16, 49, 79

U

Unorthodox 13
Uthup, E. J. 54

V

Varghese, K. C. Father vi
Vattaseril 1, 28, 29f., 33, 109
Veera Raghava Iyenkar, Chief justice 49, 53, 64, 104
Vettickel 30
Viceroy 59

W

West 71, 106
West Syriac 90
West Syrian 3, 64, 68, 70, 90, 105
Westcott, Anglican Metropolitan of Calcutta 60
Will 66
Wilson, Daniel, Anglican bishop 9

Z

Zaka, Mar: Patriarch 73
Zamorin 1

A SHORT, SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agur, C.	*Church History of Travancore,* S. P. S. Press, Vepery, Madras, 1903.
Brooks. E. W. (ed)	*Historia Ecclesiastica Vulgo Adscripta,* I Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Vol. 83, Scripores Syri, Tomus 38, 1919.
	..... II, CSCO 84, Sc. Syr. 39.
Brown, L. W.	*The Indian Christians of St. Thomas* , Cambridge, 1956. Reissue 1982.
Chabot, I. B. (ed)	*Chronicon Anonymum, Pseudo Dionysianum Vulgo Dictum,* I, CSCO 91, Sc. Syr. 43, 1953.
.. (ed)	..... II, CSCO 104, Sc. Syr. 53, 1952.
. (ed)	*Chronicon Anonymum ad annum Christi* 1234, Pertinens I, CSCO 81, Scr. Syr. 36, 1953.
.. (ed)	..... II, CSCO 82, Sc. Syr. 37, 1916.
.. (ed)	*Synodicon Orientale,* Paris, 1902.
Chabot, J. B. (ed)	*Chronique de Michel le Syrien,* Paris, 1899–1910.
Cherian, C. V.	*A History of Christianity in Kerala,* C.M.S. Press, Kottayam, 1973.
Cherian, P.	*The Malabar Christians and the Church Missionary Society,* 1816–1840, Kottayam, 1935.
Dionysius Bar Sleebi	*Commentary of the Holy Qurbana.*
Fortescue, Adrian	*The Lesser Eastern Churches.*
....	*The Greater Eastern Churches.*
Frend, W.H.C.	*The Rise of the Monophysite Movement,* Cambridge, 1972.
Geddes, M.	*The History of the Church of Malabar from* 1501, London,
Gregorios Bar Ebraya	*Ecclesiastical History.*
..	The book of the *Hudaya* (A collection of canon laws)
..	The book of *Zalga* (A theological compendium).
..	The book of *Mnarath Qudsa* (A detailed theological work).
Ittoop Writer	*A History of the Christians of Malabar,* Malayalam.
Keay, F. E.	*A History of the Syrian Church,* SPCK, Madras, 1928.
Kollaparambil, J.	*Archdeacon of All-India,* Rome, 1972.

Mackenzie, G. T.	*Christianity in Travancore,* Trivandrum, 1901.
Menon, Sridhara A.	*A Survey of Kerala History,* Kottayam, 1967.
Mingana, A.	*The Early Spread of Christianity in India,* The Bulletin of the the John Rylands Library, Vol. 10, No. 2.
Moses Bar Keepha	*Commentary on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Qurbana.*
Mundadan, A. M.	*History of Christianity in India, Church History Association of India,* Vol. I, Bangalore, 1984.
..	*Indian Christians Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy*, Dharmaram publication, Bangalore, 1984.
Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series	Vols. I to VII and XIV.
Paret, Z. M.	*Malankara Nasranikal* , Kottayam Vols. III, IV, VIII, IX and X.
Philip, E. M.	*The Indian Church of St. Thomas,* Tr. E. P. Mathew, Chingavanam, 1951.
Samuel, V. C.	*The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined,* C.L.S., Madras, 1977.
..	*Itu Oru Indian Sabhayo?* C.L.S., Thiruvella, 1973.
..	*Malankara Sabhayude Anthiochian Bandham,* Kottayam, 1982.
..	*Sabha Valarunnu,* Kottayam, 1984.
Souvenir	*Fiftieth Death Anniversary of Vattaseril Mar Dionysius,* Kottayam, 1984.
Segal, J. B.	*Edessa, the Blessed City,* Oxford, 1970.
Stewart, J.	*Nestorian Missionary Enterprise, The Story of a Church on Fire,* Madras, 1928.
Sullivan, F. A.	*Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia,* Rome, 1956.
Voobus, Arthur	*School of Nisibis,* CSCO 260, Subsida, Tome 26, Louvain, 1965.
..	*Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition,* I, CSCO 367, Sc. Syr. 161, Louvain 1975.
..	..... II, CSCO, Sc. Syr. 163, Louvain 1976.
Wigram, W. A.	*An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church,* London, 1910.
..	*Separation of the Monophysites,* London, 1923.
Wright, W.	*A Short History of Syriac Literature,* London 1894.
Young, William G.	*A Source Book of Church History.*
..	*Patriarch, Shah and Caliph,* Rawalpindi, 1974.
Zachariah and Mammen	*Irupatham Nutandile Malankara Sabha,* Kottayam, 1977.

CORRIGENDA

Page	*Line*	*Wrong*	*Correct*
18	18	Antionchene	Antiochene
23	27	examination of	examination
24	20	this aim mind	this aim in mind
27	17	referred to as	referred to later as
41	2	1559	1599
61	7	as ar Dionysius	as Mar Dionysius
63	3	greace	grace
93	20	Coanging of the	Changing the
104	last	1948	1950
118	5	on the that basis	on that basis
118	38	centralizazation	centralization

TRUTH TRIUMPHS
Revd. Dr. V. C. SAMUEL

Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius, an ecclesiastical leader of profound theological and historical insight is rightly called the **Malankara Sabha Bhasuran,** or the Luminary of the Church of Malabar.

For the establishment and continuance of the Catholicate at Kottayam, the Malankara Orthodox Church owes a debt of deep gratitude to this illustrious churchman more than to anyone else.

Mar Dionysius was enabled by the providence of God to accomplish this stupendous task. The story of his life and achievements is told in this book by a reputed scholar on the strength of indisputable documentary evidence.

The Revd. Father Dr. V. C. Samuel is an internationally known scholar and writer. He had his ecclesiastical studies at the Manjinikara Dayra, where he did also teach for several years as a colleague of remban Abdul Ahad, later patriarch Mar Ignatius Jacob III. He has obtained B. A. (Travancore University), M.A. (Madras University) B. D. (Serampore University), S. T. M. (Union Theological Seminary, New York), and the Ph. D. (Yale University, U. S. A.). His doctoral dissertation treats the chalcedonian question from a fresh Oriental Orthodox perspective.

Father Samuel has served on the faculties of the Serampore College (University), the United Theological College, Bangalore, in India, and the Theological College of the Holy Trinity, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he was Dean (Principal) for over seven years. Currently he is professor and Dean of Studies at the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. The services he has rendered the world Church includes his participation in the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches as a member for over 23 years from 1961.